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MAGIC IN THE THIRD AGE

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CONTRIBUTORS

Martin Burke

Bridget Buxton

Thomas Morwinsky

Chris Seeman

Graham Staplehurst

LINGUISTICS

Jesse Dallin

David Salo

EDITING

Chris Seeman

Charles Watteyne

PAGEMAKING

Ouentin Westcott

ARTWORK

Bridget Buxton

Quentin Westcott

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In response to certain criticisms he had read about *The Lord of the Rings,* Tolkien wrote, with characteristic incisiveness, "It is perhaps not possible in a long tale to please everybody at all points, nor to displease everybody at the same points (FotR.6)." The same might be said of any publication that attempts to cater to an audience with divergent interests. It is certainly true of *Other Hands,* as I have found from the feedback (positive and negative) I received in response to last issue.

Some readers have greatly enjoyed the "mega-essays" of the past few issues; others have found them less valuable to their games and overly exclusionary of other kinds of articles due to their length. A similar range of opinion, and for the same reasons, is to be found concerning Rastarin's Log and Jeff Erwin's story that appeared earlier this year.

In reality, of course, what appears in OH is determined mainly by the materials subscribers actually submit to me for publication. If *you* want to see changes, you have to start submitting the kind of material *you* want to see.

The basic issue remains the same: to satisfy everyone, there needs to be a diversity of materials, and a balance between background material and stuff that is immediately usable in a game. (I now hesitate to polarize things in terms of "practical" vs. "theoretical," since that is a false distinction for many of the articles that have appeared in recent issues.)

Fortunately, the materials lined up for the next two issues reflect this ideal. But the only way to achieve that kind of balance, diversity and proportion for the present issue has been to make it bigger. This solution, however, is not an economically sustainable one, and so cannot be relied upon in the future. And on that note, let us turn to this issue's introductions.

Ever since *Morgoth's Ring* came out in 1993, there has been a pressing need for someone to assemble and interpret Tolkien's statements concerning magic and the illustrations of it in his writings as a basis for establishing principles for simulating magic-use in MERP. Although many articles on magic have appeared in OH over the years, none has succeeded in being as comprehensive as this issue's feature essay by Martin Burke. It is my hope that this will provoke informed debate on specific topics in future issues. (Perhaps we could devote a regular column to this.)

Balancing this *magnum opus* is an equally grand scale scenario from the hands of two very significant individuals in MERP history: Thomas Morwinsky, the cartographer who brought us the Númenor and Inland Sea maps, and Graham Staplehurst, legendary author of many of the early MERP modules. Many thanks to Graham for granting us permission to revise and reprint his epic adventure from the pages of *White Dwarf* magazine!

The Mithril centerfold was chosen as a bridge between this issue's magic theme and next issue's spotlight on Mirkwood. The characters featured have one thing in common: their backgrounds are extremely thin in the modules in which they originally appeared. My commentary attempts to devise plausible histories for them, as well as indicating the names by which the Wood-elves would have known them.

We round this issue off with the final episode of Rastarin's Log. Subsequent exploits of the dread captain and her friends will hopefully start appearing on the *Other Hands* website in the not-too-distant future. I should remind everyone that the pages of OH remain open for creative contributions of this sort, but they must be of modest size in order for there to be sufficient space for the main features of each issue.

If you haven't already heard, on August 27th ICE filed for Chapter 11 Bankruptcy Protection. On September 22nd, they were compelled to unconditionally surrender their Middle-earth license to Tolkien Enterprises. That means, quite simply, that MERP is history. Period. ICE is not even allowed to sell its existing Middle-earth products anymore. What Tolkien Enterprises plans to do with the merchandise and the license is anyone's guess. To the best of my knowledge, none of this will affect the existence of OH, since -we remain strictly non-profit.

Chris Seeman
1 October, 1999

MAGIC IN THE THIRD AGE

Martin Burke
203 McKinley Parkway,
Mineola, NY 11501, USA
(roseanne.martin@worldnet.att.net)

In my discussion I won't be offering alternative game mechanics. I'm more focusing on the conceptual side of magic, its nature and relationship to people. In fact, an emphasis on the mystical, as opposed to the 'mechanical' and systematic, is central to the atmosphere of magic in Middle-earth.

An inherent characteristic, especially in the Third Age, is the mystery and often ambiguity surrounding it. When so few beings appear to actually use magic, and then mostly in ways which are not overt, is it useful or appropriate to use a 'magic system' as such? A framework of guidelines for the GM, based on an understanding of magic as expressed in the sources, would allow far more flexibility, mystery and lack of predictability in the game.

I would contend that most magic should be something experienced by PCs, rather than demonstrated by them. Therefore, the GM's ability to generate effects, through creating description in a way that effectively expresses the mystery, mysticism and ambiguity surrounding magic, would obviate the need for mechanics, and more appropriately express the role of magic in Middle-earth.

The most effective, though admittedly laborious, way to go about deciding what magic it would be appropriate to allow in your campaign (and how it should be used and by whom) would be through an analysis of the primary sources. As far as a Third Age campaign goes, this would, of course, especially mean *The Lord of the Rings* (LotR). Although there are actually a great many examples of magic use in LotR they are rarely overt, and many can be mistaken for natural effects.

Important to the atmosphere of magic in Middle-earth is, as mentioned above, its often ambiguous nature. Effects are often seen from a character's point of view and Tolkien then is not explicit about whether an occurrence really was magical or just appeared to be to the character.

A good example would be at the beginning of *The Fellowship of the Ring* when Gandalf tries to persuade Bilbo to give up the Ring. Gandalf "took a step towards the hobbit, and he seemed to grow tall and menacing; his shadow filled the little room," then "he turned away, and the shadow passed. He seemed to dwindle again to an old grey man, bent and troubled (FotR.42)." This could be Gandalf using a magical illusion to scare Bilbo into giving up the Ring, or a natural effect of the shadows coupled with Bilbo's shock at never having seen Gandalf react like that before.

Another example is when Frodo was on the Barrow-downs: "he had passed between [the pillars] almost before he was aware and as he did so darkness *seemed to fall around him* (FotR. 150; my emphasis)." The important word here is, of course, 'seem', so we are not sure if darkness suddenly and magically descended or whether this is merely Frodo's perception, affected by his fear.

More impressive, yet ambiguous in both the source and nature of the effect, is Galadriel's appearance to Frodo when he offers her the One Ring: "She stood before Frodo now seeming tall beyond measurement, and beautiful beyond enduring, terrible and worshipful. Then she let her hand fall, and the light faded, and suddenly she laughed again, and lo! She was shrunken (FotR.381)." If an expression of magic, perhaps Galadriel temporarily revealed her true aura as one who had lived in Aman. (See p. 5 below.) Or perhaps she revealed the power of Nenya, the Ring of Water, as is suggested by her mentioning of her Ring to Sam, whom she assumes, rightly, could not see it.

Although I believe that most knowledgeable Middle-earth role players would agree that magic use in Middle-earth is highly subtle and limited, this ambiguity leaves ample scope for individual GMs to decide the exact extent of magic use they want in their campaign. The players may experience effects or occurrences that appear to be magical (and a GM can explain it to them as if it definitely is magical - as their characters' preconceptions may immediately lead them to this conclusion), while it could be a long time, if ever, until they discover whether 'magic' really was involved.

Another confusing factor is Tolkien's approach to describing many of the effects of fear and other strong emotions. For example, he often uses spell metaphors, with the result that one is not sure sometimes whether magic has been used or not. When Frodo recognised the Witch-king in Morgul Vale and thought about the wound he had given him: "these thoughts pierced him with dread and held him bound as with a spell (TT.351)." Tolkien uses these metaphors, especially referring to 'spells', sufficiently often to dispel (no pun intended) the thought that it is a coincidence.

Contrary to what many readers may believe, there are in fact a myriad of expressions of magic use in LotR, in addition to the more obvious ones in *The Hobbit*. Many are overlooked because of their subtlety or the casual way they are slipped in, going almost unnoticed. Take for example Thranduil's warning to the Dwarves that "there is no escape from my magic doors for those who are once brought inside (Hob. 183)." Also, after Glorfindel's touching of Frodo's Morgul-wound, Frodo immediately felt better, less cold in the area of the wound, could see more clearly and improved in spirit (FotR.223).

However, Tolkien only infrequently uses the words 'magic' or 'magical' to refer to specific, definite instances of its use. In fact most magic appears in relation to objects or their use. These tend to be rare, their effects often psychological, and so do not appear as dramatic expressions of magic use.

Actual magic use is usually very subtle, especially consisting of gathering information and battles of will. For example, at the battle of Minas Tirith,

after the point where Gandalf assumed control in all but name, "tirelessly he strode from Citadel to Gate, from north to south about the wall (RotK.98)." As this was such a significant battle, in what could have been the last war against Sauron if they lost, it seems likely he would have used magical means to transport himself around the city if he had been able to (such as flying or teleportation). If Gandalf, who was undoubtedly one of the most powerful magic users in Third Age Middle-earth, didn't have access to such powers it seems unlikely that others would. The Witch-king, an accomplished sorcerer, also showed no signs of any such abilities.

In addition to a study of the central sources for an analysis of magic in the late Third Age, *The Hobbit* and LotR, other useful material can be found in especially Tolkien's published letters. Care must be taken with these post-LotR justifications as they are sometimes awkward attempts to explain a variety of phenomena, and are sometimes contradictory. Nevertheless, they often give further insight into vague and ambiguous elements of Tolkien's stories.

The following large excerpt is particularly helpful in understanding Tolkien's own thoughts on the nature of magic in LotR. I give it in full here to show the relevance, and range, of some of his more philosophical statements, but save an analysis of the significance of individual ideas until I discuss specific areas of magic in the sections that follow:

I suppose that, for the. purposes of the tale, some would day that there is a latent distinction such as once was called the distinction between magia *and* goeteia*. Galadriel speaks of the "deceits of the Enemy". Well enough, but* magia *could be, was, held good (per se), and* goeteia *bad. Neither is, in this tale, good or bad (per se), but only by motive or purpose or use. Both sides use both, but with different motives. The supremely bad motive is (for this tale, since it is specifically about it) domination of other 'free' wills. The Enemy's operations are by no means all goetic deceits, but 'magic' that produces real effects in the physical world, but his magia he uses to bulldoze both people and things, and his goeteia to terrify and subjugate. Their* magia *the Elves and Gandalf use (sparingly): a* magia*, producing real results (like fire in a wet faggot) for specific beneficent purposes. Their goetic effects are entirely artistic and not intended to deceive: they never deceive Elves (but may deceive or bewilder unaware Men) since the difference is to them as clear as the difference to us between fiction, painting, and sculpture, and 'life'.*

Both sides live mainly by 'ordinary' means. The Enemy, or those who have become like him, go in for 'machinery' - with destructive and evil effects - because 'magicians', who have become chiefly concerned to use magia for their own power, would do so (do do so). The basic motive for magia *- quite apart from any philosophic consideration of how it would work - is immediacy: speed, reduction of labour, and reduction also to a minimum (or vanishing point) of the gap between the idea or desire and the result or effect. But the* magia *may not be easy to come by, and at any rate if you have command of abundant slave-labour or machinery (often only the same thing concealed), it may be as quick or quick enough to push mountains over, wreck forests, or build pyramids by such means. Of course another factor then comes in, a moral or pathological one: the tyrants lose sight of objects, become cruel, and like smashing, hurting, and defiling as such. It would no doubt be possible to defend poor Lotho's introduction of more efficient mills; but not Sharkey and Sandyman's use of them.*

Anyway, a difference in the use of 'magic' in this story is that it id not to be come by by 'lore' or spells; but is an inherent power not possessed or attainable by Men as such.

Aragorn's 'healing' might be regarded as 'magical', or at least a blend of magic with pharmacy and 'hypnotic' processes. But it is (in theory) reported by hobbits who have very little notions of philosophy and science; while A. is not a pure 'Man', but at long remove one of the 'children of Lúthien'. (Let. 199-200)

> I once knew every spell in all the tongues of Elves or Men or Orcs...

A wealth of information can be gleaned from here on the relationship between magic and motivation, morality, corruption, race, and innate versus learned magic. It also suggests that definitions of types of magic may have more to do with usage and motivation than any categorical differences. So, for example, when sorcery is mentioned in LotR, it may actually refer to using magic for evil purposes rather than saying anything about the nature and origins of the magic itself. On the other hand, 'sorcery' could refer to magic from the 'Morgoth-element', a source of magic whose nature involves corruption and evil purposes. (See p. 16 below.)

Not only is Tolkien often very vague about such things, but when he does discuss them he often contradicts himself in different places. Although this may be frustrating from a perspective of desiring absolute knowledge, again it gives scope for GMs to decide such things for a campaign based on their own preferences and what is most appropriate for the nature of the campaign, while maintaining an authentic Tolkienian feel (if that is the GM's intention).

After an examination of the actual and potential uses and expressions of magic in the sources, I found that the most important factors were the following: 1) innate and racial aspects, 2) mind and will, 3) evil and corruption, and 4) language, speech and song.

INNATE AND RACIAL ASPECTS

In the passage from *Letters* quoted in full above Tolkien states that: "[magic] is not to be come by by 'lore' or spells; but it is an inherent power (Let.200)." This would appear to solve the problem of whether magic is innate, learnt, or both. However, there are occasions where Tolkien appears to contradict himself on this point, and in a footnote to the passage acknowledges the difficulty of this statement. (See p. 9 below.)

While trying to think of a spell to open the west gate of Moria, Gandalf says: "I once knew every spell in all the tongues of Elves or Men or Orcs that was ever used for such a purpose. I can still remember ten score of them without searching in my mind (FotR.320)." This can be interpreted in various ways. It could be that the magic was peculiar to those races, or to the languages of those races. If the races themselves, this would mean that at least some Orcs could use magic, and that there would also be Mannish spellcasters. However, if it is the languages which are significant, perhaps certain languages have certain specific properties that lend themselves to specific kinds and uses of magic. Considering Tolkien's love of languages it doesn't seem that implausible.

Either way it is not clear whether these 'spells' can normally be learned or if they are innate to certain peoples. Also, if not innate, such spells must presumably be learned, and used, in those languages. A further important factor are the words "for such a purpose," indicating that Gandalf's reflections on magic here only apply to opening magic doors, not to magic use in general. This corresponds with the nature of most magic in the Third Age, which is related to the mind and senses, or as in this case, to objects.

Blood, Lineage and Nobility

Power is often innate to a greater degree in those of noble birth, or descendants of powerful individuals. This is reflected in great strength of will and other powers of potentially magical application. However, this power of nobility wanes with time, as descendants are rarely more powerful than their ancestors. The following comment on Gondorians' shortened life-span by the late Third Age shows this weakening, and the power of nobility: "for that they had found no cure; and indeed the span of their lives had now waned to little more than that of other men, and those among them who passed the tale of five score years with vigour were grown few, save in some houses of purer blood (RotK.137)."

There are many examples in LotR and *The Hobbit* of those of noble birth performing better than others, and more than could be accounted for by merely their tutelage. For example, after the battle of the Pelennor Fields, apart from Théoden, the chief nobles (Aragorn, Éomer and Imrahil) are unhurt: "these three were unscathed, for such was their fortune and the skill and might of their arms, and few indeed had dared to abide them or look on their faces in the hour of their wrath (RotK.124)." After such a battle, for these three leaders to be completely 'unscathed' goes beyond skill or luck. Legolas explains how Aragorn's strength relates to his nobility with reference to his capture of Pelargir: "in that hour I looked on Aragorn and thought how great and terrible a Lord he might have become in the strength of his will, had he taken the Ring to himself...But nobler is his spirit than the understanding of Sauron; for is he not of the children of Luthien? (RotK.152)."

In the Third Age more power resides in individuals who are members of races which were powerful in the First Age, and especially in those of 'purer' blood. Gandalf said about Denethor that: "he is not as other men of this time, Pippin, and whatever be his descent from father to son, by some chance the blood of Westernesse runs nearly true in him; as it does in his other son, Faramir, and yet did not in Boromir whom he loved best (RotK.31)." Denethor was a great leader of men, though he fell into despair in the end through his manipulation by Sauron, and Faramir was great of spirit too, whereas Boromir, less 'pure' of blood, was more easily corrupted.

In *Letters*, Tolkien explains that all such nobility ultimately comes from the Firstborn, who were: "doomed to fade before the Followers (Men), and to live ultimately only by the thin line of their blood that was mingled with that of Men, among whom it was the only real claim to 'nobility' (Let. 176)." Therefore, among Men, only those descended from Lúthien and Beren, or another Elf-Man relationship, can claim true nobility, reflected in their enhanced power. This, then, is undoubtedly the source of Aragorn's nobility and strength, expressed in his use of *athelas* and the Orthanc-stone.

Lineage and legal right are both important when it comes to using a *palantír*. Concerning the Orthanc-stone, Aragorn said: "I am the lawful master of the Stone, and I had both the right and the strength to use it, or so I judged. The right cannot be doubted. The strength was enough - barely (RotK.53)." This is also part of the reason why Denethor was able to use the Anor-stone without being dominated by Sauron. In his essay on the Palantíri, Tolkien explains this right:

> *These Stones were an inalienable gift to Elendil and his heirs, to whom alone they belonged by right; but this does not mean that they could only be used rightfully by one of these 'heirs'. They cold be used lawfully by anyone authorised by either the 'Heir of Anárion' or the 'Heir of Isildur', that is, a lawful King of Gondor or Arnor. Actually they must normally have been used by such deputies....Since the Stewardship had become hereditary from 1998 onwards, so the authority to use, or again to depute the use, of the Stones, was lawfully transmitted in their line, and belonged therefore fully to Denethor.* (UT.427)

Such connections between nobility, lineage, rightful ownership and power have many role playing applications. A PC's lineage is important in determining their limits and abilities, in addition to their relationship to objects and positions of power. This, of course, also applies to NPCs and affects the way those of noble blood interact with others, as any 'superiority' has a basis in power as well as the legal and class aspects.

Lineage and legal right are both important when it comes to using a *palantír*

Enchantment and Aura

Unless it is just a psychological feeling of 'enchantment' created by seeing peoples so otherworldly, maybe Elves, Maiar and other *faerie* folk actually have a magical aura which affects mortals. When Frodo first saw Goldberry, "he stood as he had at times stood enchanted by fair elvish-voices; but the spell that was now laid upon him was different: less keen and lofty was the delight, but deeper and nearer to mortal heart; marvellous and yet not strange (FotR.134)." This might indicate that unlike the aloof and stand-offish Elves, Goldberry is a spirit, like Tom Bombadil, close to the land and in tune with nature. Therefore Hobbits would feel closer to her and so she wouldn't seem so alien to them.

The aura also appears to rub off on those who spend time with immortals who do not (unlike Gandalf) conceal their power. The effect, however, would presumably be very subtle and perceivable only by those with acute senses for such things. Goldberry says to Frodo: "I can see you are an elf-friend; the light in your eyes and the ring in your voice tells it(FotR.135)."

Aragorn may also display a (usually hidden) aura of majesty, which, as explained above, has its origin in his descent from Lúthien. On first encounter with Éomer and his warriors, Aragorn declared himself openly. At that moment, Legolas and Gimli: "in his living face caught a brief vision of the power and majesty of the kings of stone. For a moment it seemed to the eyes of Legolas that a white flame flickered on the brows of Aragorn like a shining crown (TT.36)." However, it is possible that this is just Aragorn's pride, charisma and confidence showing through. The fact that it was only visible to Legolas, though, suggests that his sensitivity enabled him to detect an aura the others could not (as Goldberry detected Frodo s association with Elves).

An aura is often associated with Elvish people and places, which affects those who spend some time close to them. Concerning a land which Noldorin Elves once inhabited, Gandalf said that: "there is a wholesome air about Hollin. Much evil must befall a country before it wholly forgets the Elves, if once they dwelt there (FotR.297)." When the Hobbits spotted Noldor in the Woody End at night: "They bore no lights, yet as they walked a shimmer, like the light of the moon above the rim of the hills before it rises, seemed to fall about their feet (FotR.89)." Faramir thought that: "there is something strange about you, Frodo,

an elvish air, maybe (TT.304)." Something in his bearing could have reflected a wisdom or knowledge gained from experiencing Elvish culture, or a magical aura, or maybe the feeling Faramir gets is because of the Ring, and its sharpening of Frodo's senses.

Tolkien stated that aura is a reflection of strength of spirit in an Incarnate individual:

[Spirit] they call fëa *or* fairë, *of which the ancient significance seems to be rather 'radiance'. For though the* fëa *in itself is not visible to bodily eyed, it is in light that the Eldar find the most fitting symbol in bodily terms of the indwelling spirit, 'the light of the house', or* cöacalina *as they also name it. And those in whom the* fëa *is strong and untainted, they say, appear even to mortal eyed to shine at times translucent (albeit faintly), as though a lamp burned within.* (HoMe X.250)

Although the spirit itself cannot be seen, the radiance is a 'symbol', which may indicate to an immortal the strength and corruption (or lack thereof) of one of the Eldar, and perhaps occasionally to a mortal of particular sensitivity. Here 'Eldar' is important, indicating that in Third Age northwest Middle-earth, this radiance would be associated with the Noldor (such as those the Hobbits travelled with briefly in the Shire, mentioned above) and Sindar, but not with the Silvan Elves of Rhovanion or the Avari who never heeded the call of Oromë to start the journey towards Aman.

Lórien's aura, or the feelings associated with experiencing the Elvish enclave, was particularly strong for Frodo:

...as soon as he set foot upon the far bank of Silverlode a strange feeling had come upon him, and it deepened as he walked on into the Naith: it seemed to him that he had stepped over a bridge of time into a corner of the Elder Days, and was now walking in a world that was no more. In Rivendell there was a memory of ancient things; in Lórien the ancient things still lived on in the waking world— On the land of Lórien no shadow lay. (FotR.364)

Also of Lórien it is said: "No blemish or sickness or deformity could be seen in anything that grew upon the earth. On the land of Lórien there was no stain (FotR.365)." Frodo was constantly aware of the preserving nature of Lórien: "Frodo felt that he was in a timeless land that did not fade or change or fall into forgetfulness....the South Wind blew upon Cerin Amroth and sighed among the branches. Frodo stood still, hearing far off great seas upon beaches that had long ago been washed away, and sea-birds crying whose race had perished from the earth (FotR.365, 366)."

...they seem to have existence in both worlds (Middle-earth and Aman)., and so can perceive the shadow-world and do not fear it.

So there are powerful feelings of purity, and of timelessness, while experiencing ancient things, associated with the land. As well as reflecting the culture, desires and innate magic of the Elves, especially the Noldor, this is also due to Nenya, Galadriel's Elven Ring. Nenya, along with Narya and Vilya, is a more overt expression of Elvish magic in the Third Age. However, even these powerful objects have effects which are more usually concerned with the mind and senses, and so goetic, than affecting the material world directly, which is *magia* and more associated with evil magic users. This distinction is not absolute, however, as Gandalf's uses of magical fire in *The Hobbit* and LotR may be related to his possession of Narya, the Ring of Fire. But Gandalf is not an Elf, and such overt uses of magic as Gandalf displays are not typical of the way Elves choose to interact with the world. (See p. 10 below.)

The Origin of Elvish Power

The Elves of northwest Middle-earth after the First Age, and especially those Noldor and Sindar who experienced Beleriand or Aman, are concerned particularly with memory, and the preservation of knowledge and beauty. One of the primary aims of their cultures is to maintain as much of a semblance of the beauty and majesty that characterised their cultures and achievements as possible before the Second Age. In Letters Tolkien explained the relationship of Elves to change and preservation in LotR:

Mere change as such is not represented as 'evil: it is the unfolding of the story and to refuse this is of course against the design of God. But the Elvish weakness is in these terms naturally to regret the past, and to become unwilling to face change....Hence they fell in a measure to Sauron's deceits: they desired some 'power' over things as they are, to make their particular will to preservation effective: to arrest change, and keep things always fresh and fair. (Let.236)

This theme of memory and preservation in association with the Elves is found throughout LotR. Legolas explained to Gimli, upon the latter admitting his sorrow at leaving Lothlórien: "But you have not forsaken your companions, and the least reward that you shall have is that the memory of Lothlórien shall remain ever clear and unstained in your heart, and shall neither fade nor grow stale (FotR.395)." Legolas would only know this if it were common to all Elvish things, or if he was aware that the dwellings of the Noldor and Sindar in north-west Middle-earth were like that. Gimli mused: "indeed I have heard that for [Elves] memory is more like to the world than to a dream (FotR.395)." Maybe then the effect on the memory of those who spend time among the Elves is a reflection of Elvish nature or culture.

Much, if not all, Elvish power seems to be associated with the Blessed Realm and the Ainur. Elves who have lived in Aman have special powers. For example, they seem to have existence in both worlds (Middle-earth and Aman), and so can perceive the shadow-world and do not fear it. Of this Gandalf says: "the Elven-wise, lords of the Eldar...do not fear the Ring-wraiths, for those who have dwelt in the Blessed Realm live at once in both worlds, and against both the Seen and the Unseen they have great power (FotR.235)."

In LotR this applies to Galadriel and Glorfindel. While discussing the latter's role at the Ford of Bruinen, Frodo said: "I thought that I saw a white figure that shone and did not grow dim like the others," to which Gandalf replied: "you saw him for a moment as he is upon the other side: one of the mighty of the First-born (FotR.235)." The others grew dim because Frodo was partly in the shadow-world, due to his 'fading' caused by the Morgul-wound, while he could see Glorfindel clearly for that very same reason.

There are two short essays on the nature and history of Glorfindel in *The Peoples of Middle-earth*. In these Tolkien discarded the idea that the Glorfindel of Third Age Rivendell and the Glorfindel

slain in First Age Gondolin were different people, and explained what happened to him after his death:

When Glorfindel of Gondolin was slain his spirit would according to the laws established by the One be obliged at once to return to the land of the Valar....After his purging of any guilt he had incurred in the rebellion [of the Noldor in Aman], he was released from Mandos, and Manwë restored him. He then became again a living incarnate person, but was permitted to dwell in the Blessed Realm; for he had regained the primitive innocence and grace of the Eldar. For long years he remained in Valinor, in reunion with the Eldar who had not rebelled, and in the companionship of the Maiar. To these he had now become almost an equal, for though he was incarnate his spiritual power had been greatly enhanced by his self-sacrifice. (HoMe XII.380)

Tolkien explains that Glorfindel was probably sent to Middle-earth by the Valar in the middle of the Second Age, to help Gil-galad and Elrond in the defence against Sauron. He mentions that there is an "air of special power and sanctity that surrounds Glorfindel (*ibid .377*)." Through his long stay in Aman after his reincarnation "we can thus understand why he seems so powerful a figure and almost 'angelic' (*ibid* 378)."

The power of the Noldor who dwelt in Aman would have been brought to Middle-earth after the Rebellion and passed on to their descendants (diminishing as the generations pass). It may also have been passed on, in some lesser measure, to those Sindar and Avari with whom the Noldor came into contact in exile, possibly through the aura they impart to people and places they are close to. Elrond is another of the First Age Eldar remaining in Middle-earth. At the Houses of Healing in Minas Tirith, Aragorn said he wished that Elrond could be present as he: "is the eldest of all our race, and has the greatest power (RotK.139)." Though here, by 'race', he was referring specifically to the descendants of Beren and Lúthien.

The Nature of Elvish Power

Elves have a different conception of magic, or attitude towards it, than other peoples, which may well reflect the nature of Elvish magic:

'Are these magic cloaks?' asked Pippin, looking at them with wonder.

'I do not know what you mean by that', answered the leader of the Elves. They are fair garments, and the web is good, for it was made in this land. They are elvish robes certainly, if that is what you mean. Leaf and branch, water and stone: they have the hue and beauty of all these things under the twilight of Lórien that we love; for we put the thought of all that we love into all that we make'. (FotR.386)

This suggests that Elvish 'magic' consists, at least in part, of the ability to imbue objects they make with a power which comes from the very land around them, a power which would originally have been imparted to the land by the presence of the Noldor, or possibly other Elves, within it and so seen by the Elves as something natural, and not needing to be exerted consciously. Magic, then, is not seen as something distant and special, but as an indistinct part of the Elvish repertoire of abilities. It comprises part of their culture and environment, the techniques used to order their world.

Galadriel's comments on magic would make sense on this interpretation of Elvish 'magic'. When she mentions that mortals would call her Mirror magical, she says: "though I do not understand what they mean; and they seem also to use the same word of the deceits of the Enemy (FotR377)." The distinction she sees between Elvish power and that of Sauron could be explained if the source of his power was the Morgoth-element. In the essay 'On Fairy-stories', written in 1938, Tolkien discusses the nature of Elvish 'enchantment' in fantasy writing, and its difference from 'magic':

This is for [Elves] a form of Art, and distinct from Wizardry or Magic, properly so called....We need a word for this elvish craft, but all the words that have been applied to it have been blurred and confused with other things....Magic should be reserved for the operations of the Magician. Art is the human process that produces by the way Secondary Belief. Art of the same sort, if more skilled and effortless, the elves can also use...but the more potent and specially elvish craft I will, for lack of a less debatable word, call Enchantment. Enchantment produces a Secondary World into which both designer and spectator can enter, to the satisfaction of their senses while they are inside; but in its purity it is artistic in desire and purpose. Magic produces, or pretends to produce, an alteration in the Primary World, it does not matter by whom it is said to be practised, fay or mortal, it remains distinct from the other two; it is not an art but a technique; its desire is power in this world, domination of things and wills. Uncorrupted [Enchantment] does not seek delusion, nor bewitchment and domination; it seeks shared enrichment, partners in making delight, not slaves. (Poems and Stories.160-161)

So Tolkien is stating that Elvish enchantment is primarily goetic, in that it is "artistic in desire and purpose," functioning as a part of Elves' culture, not intending to produce "an alteration in the primary World," which is associated with *magia*. Any Elvish 'magic' evident in a campaign faithful to Tolkien's conception should then express this creative relationship to Elves' lives, and primarily sensory effects. Whereas magic associated with evil, or that of the Istari, may be presented as actually impacting the physical world, possibly permanently, and not just affecting the mind or emotions in a non-aggressive way.

The Elven Rings

At least part of the power in Lórien is due to the power of Nenya, the Ring of Water. The connection to water may especially explain at least part of the power of her Mirror and the phial she gave to Frodo. Legolas said of Lórien: "there is a secret power here that holds evil from the land (FotR352)." When Sam said: "I feel as if I was inside a song, if you take my meaning," Haldir replied "you feel the power of the Lady of the Galadrim (FotR.365)."

If the Elves of Lórien feel Galadriel to be personally responsible for its powers, this is at least partly due to Nenya, as well as her innate power from having dwelt so long in Aman. As Frodo was looking from the flet atop the tree at the centre of Cerin Amroth towards Caras Galadhon, from that direction "it seemed to him that the power and light came that held all the land in sway (FotR.366)." That Frodo was able to perceive this could be due to a heightened ability to perceive magical emanations caused by possessing the One, or Nenyas connection to the One.

Elrond's possession of Vilya, the Ring of Air, is presumably one of the primary sources of the power of Rivendell, its effect on those who stay there, and the reason why the enclave had evaded Sauron's attempts at detection for so long. Gandalf stated that: "indeed there is a power in Rivendell to withstand the might of Mordor, for a while (FotR.235)." Of course the 'power' Gandalf is referring to may also include that of Elrond, and its other powerful inhabitants, such as Glorfindel. Probably, like Lórien, the power and properties of Rivendell is a combination of that

of the Ring of Power and the culture of its inhabitants, partially expressed through their innate abilities.

Very little is ever mentioned about Gandalf's possession or use of Narya, the Ring of Fire. It may well be connected to his use of magic to create fire. In *The Hobbit*, Gandalf puts out the fire in the hall of the Great Goblin and lights pine cones to throw down at wargs from the tree he is trapped in. In LotR, some of the effects of the fireworks, designed and built by Gandalf, described at Bilbo's eleventy-first birthday party, such as the dragon whizzing over the Hobbits' heads three times before exploding over Bywater, could well be magical (FotR.36). Other uses include the ring of fire on the trees around the hill the Company was trapped on by wargs in Hollin, and the fire in a piece of wood on Caradhras.

The power, and also perhaps knowledge, necessary to create such effects (expressions of *magia* rather than *goeteia*) may have come, at least partially, from Narya. Of the weaker, less serious, Gandalf evident in *The Hobbit*, Tolkien says he "had made a special study of bewitchments with fire and lights (Hob. 105)." Although written well before the Rings of Power were thought up, perhaps a connection could still be made. Maybe Gandalf's interest in fire arose from his possession of Narya, encouraging him to explore this area in order to be able to more effectively use the ring's powers.

Narya's power was also more subtle and goetic in effect, as it helped in swaying others to Gandalf's cause. Círdan explained to Gandalf, upon giving him the ring at the Grey Havens that its power was in "the kindling of all hearts to courage (UT.407)." Círdan apparently gave Narya to Gandalf not only in recognition of Gandalf's future need of its "aid and comfort," but also because "here upon the West-shores it is idle," so presumably he considered Lindon too remote to need the protection Narya would afford (UT.406-7).

Tolkien stated explicitly that: "the Three Rings of the Elves, wielded by secret guardians, are operative in preserving the memory of the beauty of old, maintaining enchanted enclaves of peace where Time seems to stand still and decay is restrained, a semblance of the bliss of the True West (Let. 157)." However, it should be kept in mind that the Three are a reflection of the wishes and motivation of the Noldor remaining in Middle-earth after the end of the First Age, so only agents acting to affect their world in ways that express their culture.

It is important to take into consideration that Sauron's instruction was necessary for Celebrimbor to make the Rings of Power, demonstrating that even such subtle direct magical affects as those produced by the Three, so involving *magia* as well as *goeteia*, was not something the Noldor were themselves capable of. This is something more associated with the direct innate powers of the Ainur than the reflected power inherent in the Calaquendi.

Galadriel says to Frodo that if he succeeds in destroying the One, "then our power is diminished, and Lothlórien will fade, and the tides of Time will sweep it away. We must depart into the West, or dwindle to a rustic folk of dell and cave, slowly to forget and to be forgotten (FotR.431)." This same diminishment that she dreads so much would, ironically, have occurred that much sooner without the preserving power of the Elvish Rings, which would not have been possible without Sauron's knowledge.

Elvish Magic in Objects

The objects the Company were given exhibit subtle qualities, usually associated with nature in some way, probably reflecting their origin in the magic of Lórien. Their powers are not overt or definitively detectable as 'magic' to a casual user. The cloaks provided considerable camouflage: "It was hard to say of what colour they were: grey with the hue of twilight under the trees they seemed to be; and yet if they were moved, or set in another light, they were green as shadowed leaves, or brown as fallow fields by night, dusk-silver as water under the stars (FotR.232)." Yet they do not provide total chameleon-like 'invisibility' in any environment: "not even the cloaks of Lórien would have concealed them there (TT.294)," referring to the plain of Dagorlad. Also they were a result of the handiwork of Galadriel and her maidens, and so not likely to be given to any but the most honoured PCs.

The rope placed in their boats by the Elves of Lórien was "grey of hue like the elvish-cloaks (FotR.233)," suggesting perhaps common characteristics of construction and so maybe imbued with the same love of their land (expressed as retaining some of its magic). The rope appeared to untie itself after being used in the Emyn Muil by Frodo and Sam. This is presumably a magical property of the rope, as Sam seems to feel: "I think the rope came off itself - when I called (TT.218)."

Elves present when the Fellowship reached the boats made ready for them at the banks of the Silverlode say they are "light-built, and they are crafty and unlike the boats of other folk. They will not sink, lade them as you will (FotR.388)." This last property especially, if meant literally, is undoubtedly magical.

When Galadriel gives Aragorn the gift of a scabbard for Andúril she says that: "the blade that is drawn from this sheath shall not be stained or broken even in defeat (FotR.391)," again a power Men would call 'magic'.

Of Galadriel's gift to Sam, she says: "In this box there is earth from my orchard, and such blessing as Galadriel has still to bestow upon it....Though you should find all barren and laid waste, there will be few gardens in Middle-earth that will bloom like your garden, if you sprinkle this earth there (FotR.392)." So its powers are presumably a combination of the natural 'magical' essence of the land of Lórien with the 'blessing' of Galadriel. The second could be an expression of a conscious exertion of power.

More evidence is given for the assertion that Elvish things are imbued with the power of their people, in Gollum's reaction to being tied up with Sam's Elvish rope: "Gollum began to scream, a thin, tearing sound, very horrible to hear. He writhed, and tried to get his mouth to his ankle and bite the rope. He kept on screaming (TT.224)." Gollum said that, "it hurts us, it hurts us. It freezes, it bites! Elves twisted it, curse them (*ibid*)"

His reaction to eating *lembas* was equally strong: "he spat, and a fit of coughing shook him. 'Ach! No!' He spluttered. 'You try to choke poor *Sméagol* (TT.229)." As he was obviously unaware that the food was of Elvish origin when he bit into it the answer to his aversion to Elvish things must be something that he is physically or magically 'allergic' to rather than being psychological. This implies that there is something in the nature of Elvish objects that can be detected, at least indirectly, such as via Gollum's apparent allergy.

The phial of Galadriel exhibits Elvish powers of preserving knowledge and aiding memory, in addition to expressing the Noldor's relationship to the holy power of starlight. It has the power to combat evil through light. When the Ring was compelling him to put it on in the presence of the Witch-king in Morgul Vale, Frodo forced himself to touch the phial of Galadriel instead: "as he touched it, for a while all thought of

the Ring -was banished from his mind (TT.316)."

The phial's Elvish power over knowledge is seen with Frodo. When confronted by Shelob, "[Frodo] gazed in wonder at this marvellous gift that he had so long carried, not guessing its full worth and potency. *Aiya Eärendil Elenion Ancalima!* He cried, and knew not what he had spoken; for it seemed that another voice spoke through his, clear, untroubled by the foul air of the pit (TT.329)." The same power affected Sam as he was about to be attacked by Shelob and thought of the phial:

'Galadriel' he said faintly, and then he heard voices far off but clear: the crying of the Elves as they walked under the stars in the beloved shadows of the Shire, and the music of the Elves ad it came through his sleep in the Hall of Fire in the house of Elrond.

Gilthoniel A Elbereth!

And then his tongue was loosed and his voice cried in a language he did not know:

A Elbereth Gilthoniel
o menel palan-díriel,
le nallon sí di'nguruthos!
A tiro nin, Fanuilos!' (TT.338-339)

In great need the power of the phial, whether entirely due to the holiness of the light of Eärendil's star, or also Galadriel's blessing, exhibits the Noldorin passion for ancient knowledge and memory, but greatly enhanced, so as to give a wielder the ability to speak in Sindarin without knowing the words.

It may be that all objects of Elvish, or at least Eldarin, origin exhibit properties that others would call 'magic'. The strength of such properties, though, is likely to be a reflection of the power of their maker and would rarely be given to those who are not also of the First-born.

Dwarven Magic

Dwarven magic seems to be only associated with the creation of objects. This power, like that of the Elves, derives from the Valar, in this case presumably exclusively from their creator, the greatest smith in Arda, Aulë.

Some of the most impressive magical objects of Dwarven construction are secret openings. Both that of Erebor and the West-gate of Moria are powerful examples, and Gimli states that: "Dwarf-doors are not made to be seen when shut. They are invisible, and their own masters cannot find them or open them, if their secret is forgotten (FotR.317)."

There -would appear to be various mechanisms for their opening, though presumably each door is only able to be opened in one specific way. The Erebor door is able to sense the last light of Durin's Day, which reveals the keyhole, and presumably it wouldn't be possible to locate the door, at least by non-magical means, at any other time, otherwise one wouldn't need the instructions on the map - just knowledge of the exact location of the keyhole and how to access it.

The West-gate of Moria, in contrast, had a verbal opening mechanism, just speaking the word *mellon*, though Gandalf does say that this door's secret wasn't only supposed to be known by Dwarves, suggesting that this mechanism could be unusual. Some variety is also demonstrated by Gandalf: "Some dwarf-gates will open only at special times, or for particular persons; and some have locks and keys that are still needed when all necessary times and words are known (FotR.318)."

...Aiya Eärendil Elenion Ancalima! He cried, and knew not what he had spoken; for it seemed that another voice spoke through his...

Dwarven powers of spell-casting were seen in *The Hobbit*, when they first find the secret entrance to Erebor. In addition to striking the (at that point still invisible) door, "they spoke fragments of broken spells of opening (Hob.219)." This suggests there are various opening spells, that they need to be spoken and that they don't always work (perhaps because they were only fragments or they are meant primarily to open non-magical doors).

Such spell-use by Dwarves can be justified, though not mentioned in LotR, as magic relating to the creation of magical objects (they might only work on Dwarven doors) and so also coming from Aulë. Other spells used by the Dwarves in *The Hobbit* are when the parry put "a great many spells (Hob.53)" on the pots of gold taken from the trolls' lair, which they buried. The spells were "just in case they ever had a chance to come back and recover them (ibid)," so they could have been spells of hiding or to aid recovery (such as creating a magical beacon they could home in on), or both. ('They' suggests that not only Gandalf, but the Dwarves also cast these spells.)

These may be justified with reference to the Dwarves connection with gold, which is perhaps something innate and therefore related to Aulë in some way. However, as Dwarves using spells is not referred to in LotR one may prefer to ignore these references and limit Dwarven magic to construction of objects only. Also it is perhaps a 'magic', like that of the Elves, which they impart naturally to their creations, rather than an overt exertion of magical power, such as spells.

Númenórean Magic

Apart from references to the Arthadan seer, Malbeth, whose ancestry in unclear, magical powers are not attributed to any of the Edain who do not also have Elvish blood - that is, who are not heirs of Elendil. Apart from the powers of Aragorn (See p. 11 below.), references to magic consist of objects that they are said, or can be assumed, to have created.

In the passage in *Letters* previously quoted in full, Tolkien states that magic is "an inherent power not possessed or attainable by Men as such (Let.200)." He then goes on to say that Aragorn's powers may in part only appear to be magical, and that those that are come from his being descended from Lúthien. However, he was aware of the possible lack of consistency caused by the existence of magical swords forged by Men of Númenor: in a footnote to his comments on human magic, Tolkien wrote, "But the Numenoreans used 'spells' in making swords? (Let.445)." One could decide that such weapons, in addition to being very rare, were created by those in Numenor, or Arnor and Gondor, with Elvish blood. Another possibility is that the Edain gained from the aura, or proximity, of Eldar in the First Age, and this gave them the power, diminishing with the generations, to imbue objects with 'magic'.

Pippin says of Orthanc that: "It is very hard and smooth. Some wizardry is in it, perhaps, older and stronger than Saruman's (TT.174)." However, this could be just his awe at the skill of Númenórean -workmanship. Of Boromir's horn Faramir stated: "it is said that if it be blown at need anywhere within the bounds of Gondor, as the

realm was of old, its voice will not pass unheeded" and "eleven days ago...I heard the blowing of that horn: from the northward it seemed, but dim, as if it were but an echo in the mind (TT.274)."

Concerning the staves of Gondor he gave to Frodo and Sam, Faramir said: "The men of the White Mountains use them....They are made of the fair tree *lebethron*, beloved of the woodwrights of Gondor, and a virtue has been put on them of finding and returning (TT.303)." These are all examples of magical objects associated with the men of Gondor and may be expressions of a remaining 'art' of creating magical objects. More likely, the vast majority, if not all, of such objects would have been created long ago in Númenor, or Arnor and Gondor before the waning of the powers of their peoples.

A more mystical association of the Edain with magic involves the ancient chair or throne known as the Seat of Seeing, upon Amon Hen, the "Hill of the Eye of the Men of Númenor (FotR.416)." Frodo's wide-ranging visions from here are related to his wearing of the One at that moment, but it is unlikely to be a coincidence that they occurred at this place. Perhaps the location itself has some power, possibly due to the spirit of a Maia dwelling (at some time) there, or possibly the throne was created by Dwarves or the Edain in a previous age.

Istarin Magic

Though not a race, the Istari exhibit magic use which is different to that of nearly all others in the Third Age, and this is undoubtedly a result of their being Maiar. The magic demonstrated by the Istari in LotR, especially Gandalf, is seen as what many think of as typical magic use, involving spells, ancient languages and dramatic effects, such as creating fire.

However, the magic associated with them is anything but typical in Third Age Middle-earth. In fact, the Istari are about the only individuals to demonstrate such magic usage in this Age, indicating not only the rarity of such magic, but its unusual nature. The magic, or enchantment, of the Elves is primarily expressed through imbuing their surroundings and objects with special properties, and that of the Edain is only seen in the forging of magical weapons.

Such magic does not need spells or other conscious exertions of power. The power to cast spells is probably confined to the Istari and users of evil magic. The former, as Maiar, gain their power from their nature as lesser Ainur, no doubt enhanced by proximity to the Valar. However, sorcerers and other practitioners of evil magic learn spells whose power comes from the Morgoth-element. In which case, anyone wishing to role play a character having access to overt magic-using power would need to either be Maia or a sorcerer, effectively removing such magic use from the vast majority of campaigns, at least for PCs. For this reason I will only briefly touch on the -wealth of material in Tolkien's writings on the Istari, mentioning only information that is likely to affect magic use in the majority of Middle-earth campaigns.

Much information on spell use can be gained from an analysis of Gandalf's words and actions in, and in front of, Moria. Gandalf mentions using spells on various occasions, including a 'shutting-spell' (FotR.425) on the western door of the Chamber of Mazarbul. When the Balrog's 'counter-spell' meant Gandalf no longer felt confident his spell would be sufficient he spoke a 'word of Command' (ibid). This left him almost completely exhausted, so much so that for a while he was unable even to provide the Company with light from his staff to guide their way.

Presumably words of Command are a last resort when spells are not effective enough, as they are more powerful, but very tiring. Such concepts, easily reducible into game mechanics, as the distinction between spells and words of Command, have only limited utility, however, as they are just associated with Gandalf and possibly the Lord of the Nazgûl, and so purely with the learned magic that is available to very few. (See OH 10/11.11-12.)

In the Third or Fourth Ages there could be spell-casters, especially dwelling in the South and East of Middle-earth, who learned their magic from one of the two Blue Wizards. This is a potential source of learned magic independent of Sauron. However, depending on the innate abilities of the character and on their (and the wizard's) motivation, corruption would be the likely outcome. In which case the character should be run as an independent, and of necessity probably hidden, source of evil influence. Of course, characters with sufficient moral fortitude and strength of will may be able to overcome the temptations of the path to corruption, but such individuals should be rare, and in the Second and Third Ages any such characters are keeping a very low profile.

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Other Races

Tolkien states that: "Hobbits have never, in fact, studied magic of any kind (FotR. 10)." Their stealth, for example, is explained as being purely natural.

Ents seem capable of manipulating light in water or other liquids. On his first night with the Hobbits, Treebeard at one point stood underneath the falling water at the archway to the sheltered area of Wellinghall, "then he laughed and shook himself, and wherever the drops of water fell glittering from him to the ground they glinted like red and green sparks (TT.77)."

Upon arriving at Wellinghall, "Treebeard lifted two great vessels and stood them on the table. They seemed to be filled with water; but he held his hands over them, and immediately they began to glow, one with a golden and the other with a rich green light; and the blending of the two lights lit the bay, as if the sun of summer was shining through a roof of young leaves. Looking back, the hobbits saw that the trees in the courtyard had also begun to glow, faintly at first, but steadily quickening, until every leaf was edged with light: some green, some gold, some red as copper; while the tree-trunks looked like pillars moulded out of luminous stone (TT.74)."

More dramatically, the next morning, "Treebeard raised himself from his bed with a jerk, stood up, and thumped his hand on the table. The vessels of light trembled and sent up two jets of flame (TT.77)." The glow, and other effects involving light, could be natural, a property of the trees and the liquid, or a magical property. Either way, it does not seem to be something that Treebeard is consciously exerting, but rather a property of the objects themselves that he is able to awaken.

Concerning Huorns, Merry thought: "there is a great power in them, and they seem able to wrap themselves in shadow (TT.170)." While Merry and Pippin were being carried by Treebeard on their second day with him: "for a while they felt

faintly the sense of stifling which they had noticed when they first ventured into Fangorn (TT.82)." This could be an effect of their presence or will impinging on others. Asked about the Old Forest Treebeard said that: "I do not doubt there is some shadow of the Great Darkness lying there still away north (TT.71)." As the Ents are so much a part of the land, perhaps they are more prone to corruption by the Morgoth-element which permeates Arda.

Innate or Learned

An important aspect of magic is the extent to which it is innate in a being, or can be learnt. The quote from *Letters* about magic being inherent and not learnable (See p. 4 above.), if taken at face value, would leave no place for learning spell lists at all. But then there are the cases of the Nazgûl, the Mouth of Sauron and Saruman. Gandalf said that "Saruman has long studied the arts of the Enemy (FR.270)," while the others learnt sorcery directly from Sauron.

So all instances where magic can be said to have been learnt involve 'evil' magic. Except for Gandalf. When he talks about knowing "every spell in all the tongues of Elves or Men or Ores, that was ever used for such a purpose (FR.320)," presumably his will and dedication to his cause were strong enough for him not to become corrupted through learning magic, and perhaps it is his innate power that enabled him to master so many spells, many of which (at least the Elvish ones) may never have been meant to be learnt.

Again, Tolkien's ambiguity can be beneficial, as this would allow scope for the existence of other magic users, especially Mannish ones. They could be of Númenórean descent, harnessing and formulating their inherent abilities in ways that would be learnable by other powerful individuals. The question of why they didn't have an effect on events at that time or earlier can be answered in two ways. Maybe they did but, as most people are suspicious of what they don't understand, the magic users (as mentioned earlier) would have kept their abilities quiet, using their powers in ways that most non magic users would not detect.

Of course they may have always been low-key in their usage if they were aware enough to perceive the dangers of being spotted by Sauron or the Nazgûl - a sure way to lose one's independence of action. As discussed later, Gandalf's words to the Company after magically lighting fire in a piece of wood in the Redhorn Pass demonstrate the ability of some individuals to detect, at least overt, magic use at great distances.

All the other beings that use or have magic in LotR appear to have it as something purely innate or from objects: Elrond, Galadriel, Tom Bombadil, Old Man Willow, the Balrog, Aragorn, Glorfindel, wargs, Saruman (mostly) and Radagast. Sauron is no doubt an innately powerful entity, but enhanced through 'black arts' learnt from Morgoth, and the power of the Morgoth-element.

This innate quality to so much Middle-earth magic lends credence to a racial aspect. Any magic of the Dwarves is geared towards aiding in their forging as, presumably, it comes from their creation by the greatest smith, Aule. Whereas Elvish magic is more associated with preservation and beauty and expressed appropriately - through music and song. However, this could be seen as cultural, and whether the one or the other suggests that a particular type of magic may need to be expressed in its own way. As most magic is associated with Elves, if one did not allow Elvish PCs in a Third Age campaign, magic could be kept more mysterious and thereby a more dramatic story devise through its rarity and mystery, adding to that surrounding Elves themselves.

MIND AND WILL

A considerable amount of the power expressed by characters in LotR seems to have to do with the mind in some way, especially an exertion or battle of 'will'. Aragorns powers especially involve his particularly strong will. However, Gandalf, Galadriel, Sauron and Saruman also all exhibit mental powers, and others may do so. The Two Watchers at the entrance to the Tower of Cirith Ungol are able to detect Sam despite his wearing the One, and thereby being invisible, and the *palantíri* can be used to transmit thought and struggle with the will of another.

> Sauron is no doubt an innately powerful entity, but enhanced through 'black arts' learnt from Morgoth...

Battles of Will

Arguably the greatest struggle of wills in LotR was that between Aragorn and Sauron over the former's attempt to gain control of the Orthanc *palantír*. Afterwards Aragorn explained that: "it was a bitter struggle, and the weariness is slow to pass. I spoke no word to him, and in the end I wrenched the Stone to my own will. That alone he will find hard to endure (RotK.53)."

From this we can see that Aragorn was able to defeat the Third Age's preeminent magic user. However, applying strength of will is a very different form of magic to that expressed by Gandal's fire spell, or Sauron's ability to create the One Ring. These others seem to involve knowledge, in addition to innate power, whereas strength of will may be seen as purely an expression of one aspect of an individual's personality, together with the innate magical ability to externalise this power. In fact, Tolkien states that 'will' is the mechanism by which the mind affects the world, and he calls it "the inherent energy of the spirit (Let.260)." This doesn't necessarily mean, however, that Aragorn's strength of mind or will is stronger than Sauron's - the factor of legal 'right' was involved, as mentioned in the previous section.

Will may affect allies as well as enemies, such as Aragorn's followers on the Paths of the Dead. "Then Aragorn led the way, and such was the strength of his will in that hour that all the Dúnedain and their horses followed him (RotK.60)." This innate power of mind and presence may lend allies a determination and courage applicable to a variety of situations, including combat.

Battles of will may also have constructive purposes, such as healing. In the Houses of Healing in Minas Tirith, as Aragorn attempted to help Faramir, "those that watched felt that some great struggle was going on. For Aragorn's face grew grey with weariness (RotK.141)." Aragorn may have, in fact, entered into his mind or the shadow-world, to which Faramir appeared to be headed: "Ever and anon he called the name of Faramir, but each time more faintly to their hearing, as if Aragorn himself was removed from them, and walked afar in some dark vale, calling for one that was lost (*ibid*)," and he said to Faramir: "walk no more in the shadows (RotK.142)."

This also suggests that someone with sufficiently strong will, and presumably knowledge of healing, may be able to accomplish considerable mental healing, such as recovery from trauma. Where did all this power in Aragorn come

from? Apart from what may be expected from a hardened adventurer and explorer in many foreign lands, most of Aragorn's strength of will, and perhaps all of his abilities to use that will magically, come from his lineage, as was expressed in the previous section.

Haldir says of the battle of wills between Galadriel and Sauron: "ever they strive now in thought, but whereas the light perceives the very heart of the darkness, its own secret has not yet been discovered. Not yet (FotR.366)." So Galadriel is able to read some of Sauron's thoughts (See p. 13 below.), and yet his inability to expose her use of one of the Three or read any of her thoughts could be due to the great hate and eagerness he appears to radiate (FotR.415), that may make one easier to read.

At the Ford of Bruinen, the Lord of the Nazgûl silently commanded Frodo to stop. This could be an innate power of will alone, one enhanced by his Ring, or only possible because Frodo had drifted so far towards the shadowworld, which the Ringwraiths inhabit and possibly have some power over.

There is a battle of wills between Sam and the Two Watchers at the entrance to the Tower of Cirith Ungol, and at first they are successful in halting his forward progress: "something too strong for his will to overcome barred the way (RotK.178)." There an object was able to overcome will, as when Sam revealed the light of the phial of Galadriel to them: "slowly he felt their will waiver and crumble into fear (*ibid*)."

Attitude may also be important in terms of one's susceptibility to mental attack.

In another use of an object, Sauron was involved in a struggle of wills with Denethor and Saruman, through their *palantíri*, though neither of the latter were directly aware of this:

Saruman fell under the domination of Sauron and desired his victory, or no longer opposed it. Denethor remained steadfast in his rejection of Sauron, but was made to believe that his victory was inevitable, and so fell into despair. The reasons for this difference were no doubt that in the first place Denethor was a man of great strength of will, and maintained the integrity of his personality until the final blow of the (apparently) mortal wound of his only surviving son. (UT.426)

Therefore strength of will is more important than any other innate powers one may have when it comes to struggling against the mind of another.

Struggles of will are not without cost. Aragorn felt exhausted after his battle with Sauron, and Gandalf said that Pippin had 'taken no harm' (TT.199) from his mental questioning by Sauron through the Orthanc-stone, so presumably some form of damage is possible. Luckily for Merry, his interrogation was brief and Hobbits have great psychological resilience.

Attitude may also be important in terms of one's susceptibility to mental attack. Gandalf's reply to Pippin asking if Saruman could attack them with missiles or put a spell on them was that "the last is most likely, if you ride to his door with a light heart (TT.182)."

Speech is the preferred method of Saruman to attempt to manipulate the thoughts and emotions of others. Gandalf suggests that this is his primary weapon: "Saruman has powers you do not guess. Beware of his voice! (*ibid*)." Most present when Gandalf and Théoden spoke to Saruman were quickly and deeply affected, so as to find all he said "wise and reasonable" and to become angry at those who disagreed with him. Many were affected as with a powerful post-hypnotic suggestion: "for those whom it conquered the spell endured when they were far away, and ever they heard that soft voice whispering and urging them (TT.183)."

Such direct will-manipulating power is usually seen as evil and would only be used by one who had become corrupted. Presumably it would also only be available to one of the Ainur, as no others appear to have the skill to affect minds without the use of an object. (See p. 13 below.) However, as Tolkien stated in the *Letters* passage in the introduction, motivation is one of the primary factors in making a power 'evil'. If used for a positive purpose it is possible to get away with controlling another individual. An example would be self defence, such as when Gandalf the White encountered Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli in Fangorn, and they thought he was Saruman. Gandalf was able to control the minds of the others sufficiently for them to be unable to attack him (TT. 96-98).

Mind-reading

Gandalf and Galadriel are two characters who express the greatest ability in terms of reading the memory and emotions. Upon waking in Rivendell, Frodo asked Gandalf how he knew so much about what had happened to him since he left the Shire. Gandalf's reply was that "you have talked long in your sleep, Frodo and it has not been hard to read your mind and memory (FotR.232)."

Gandalf was surprised to find out that Denethor seemed already aware of recent events the former had been involved in in Rohan and at Isengard. Gandalf may have been attempting to read Denethor's mind to discover how he knew about these things, while Denethor resisted, or it could be a metaphor, a guess on Merry's part: "Denethor and Gandalf looked each other in the eye, as if reading the other's mind (RotK.29)."

Gandalf appeared able to read Pippin's mind after the latter sneaked a look in the Orthanc-stone and was questioned by Sauron: "Pippin looked straight into [Gandalf's] eyes....'All right!' he said. 'Say no more! You have taken no harm. There is no lie in your eyes, as I feared' (TT.199)."

During Galadriel's first meeting with the Company: "she held them with her eyes, and in the silence looked searchingly at each of them in turn At length the Lady released them from her eyes Then they sighed and felt suddenly weary, as those who have been questioned long and deeply, though no words had been spoken openly (FotR.372)." She called this 'my testing of your heart' (FotR.381) when talking to Frodo later. When discussing their feelings afterwards: "All of them, it seemed, had fared alike: each had felt that he was offered a choice between something that he greatly desired: clear before his mind it lay, and to get it he had only to turn aside from the road and leave the Quest and the war against Sauron to others (FotR.373)."

Galadriel's use of the word 'revenged' (FotR.381) confirms that she was doing to the Company what she feels Frodo is now doing to her - offering her what she has 'greatly desired' (*ibid*), to see if she can resist the temptation of doing what she wants in order to do what is right. Gandalf later confirms her abilities: "Galadriel told me that [Boromir] was in peril (TT.99)."

Halbarad, with a company from the house of Elrond, said "we rode as swiftly as we might when your summons came," to Aragorn upon their meeting in Rohan, to which Aragorn replied "but I

did not summon you, save only in wish. My thoughts have often turned to you, and seldom more than tonight; yet I have sent no word (RotK.48)." Legolas says Galadriel is responsible, and Gimh believes she was reading the desire when the Company was in Lórien: "The Lady of the Wood! She read many hearts and desires (RotK.49)."

So here are possibly two very different ways of gaining information from the mind of another. Gandalf s ability seems to be more traditionally 'mind reading', whereas Galadriel demonstrates a more complex, and subtly invasive, skill of reading emotions and desires.

Sauron's abilities in this regard seem more like Gandalf's, who says, "Saruman certainly looked in the Stone since the orc-raid, and more of his secret thought, I do not doubt, has been read than he intended (TT.204-205)." Sauron's power was so great that he was able to accomplish mind reading through a *palantír*, even though this is not normally possible: "The *Palantíri* could not themselves survey men's minds, at unawares or unwilling; for the transference of thought depended on the *will* of the user on either side, and thought (received as speech) was only transmittable by one Stone to another in accord (UT.430)."

Aragorn may have also shown some ability to transfer thought during his exertion of will in reviving Faramir. When Faramir awoke, 'a light of knowledge and love' was in his eyes, and he called Aragorn 'My Lord' and 'King', yet he could not have known who he was (RotK.142).

When Pippin first looked into Treebeard's eyes, "one felt as if there was an enormous well behind them, filled up with ages of memory and long, slow, steady thinking; but their surface was sparkling with the present It felt as if something that grew in the ground...had suddenly waked up, and was considering you with the same slow care that it had given to its own inside affairs for endless years (TT.66-67)." Reading an individual's mind or emotions through their eyes happens on a number of occasions, others being Gandalf's detecting of truth in Pippin, and Galadriel's testing of the Company, mentioned above.

Scrying

Sauron is the individual most associated with being able to perceive people and events from a great distance, through the metaphor of his ubiquitous Eye. Frodo also exhibits this ability, in a tree on Cerin Amroth when he becomes aware of Galadriel and the power of Nenya (though he does not know it), and when he is wearing the One Ring upon Amon Hen. While in the Seat of Seeing he could see a long way in all directions, including as far as Isengard, Minas Tirith, and even the delta of Anduin. He also perceived Sauron's scrying:

Suddenly he felt the Eye. There was an eye in the Dark Tower that did not sleep. He knew that it had become aware of his gaze. A fierce eager will was there. It leaped towards him; almost like a finger he felt it, searching for him. Very soon it would nail him down, know know just exactly where he was. Amon Lhaw it touched. It glanced upon Tol Brandir - he threw himself from the seat, crouching, covering him head with his grey hood. (FotR.417)

Quite a lot can be gathered from this. Sauron became aware of him because of Frodo's visual perception roving over Barad-dûr, demonstrating Sauron's ability to detect scrying. In addition to such power of visual sensing, the Ring, and the Seat of Seeing, gave Frodo the ability to detect others' scrying on him, and the nature of the will. Evidently such location is not immediately accurate, but is able to scan. Perhaps the scrying power of the One is due to its origin in Sauron's essence.

The ability to detect the emanations from expressions of overt magic use is something that Gandalf was concerned about. After lighting a fire in a piece of wood on the Redhorn Pass he explained to the Company that: "If there are any to see, then I am revealed to them. I have written *Gandalf is here* in signs that can be read from Rivendell to the Mouths of Anduin (FotR.303)."

From this it is clear that such emanations can be detected from hundreds of miles away and that only by certain, presumably themselves very powerful, individuals. The Mouths of Anduin were much further away than Rivendell, so presumably Gandalf believed that no one able to perceive his action dwelt further north than Imladris, and at least one person there would have this ability - probably Elrond or Glorfindel.

Gandalf's statement that any observers would know it was him implies at least one of two things. It could be that there are so few users of overt magic in north-west Middle-earth, that anyone would guess it had to be Gandalf, especially as the magic involved fire, and this was (with light) his main area of specialism. Also, perhaps he used Narya, the Ring of Fire, and this also would give him away to any in the know. However, it is possible that magic use is so personal that expressions of its use are as individual as their creator and therefore anyone at all familiar with previous uses of magic by Gandalf would realise it was him.

Gandalf explains that he wasn't able to see what happened at the breaking of the Fellowship because "there was a darkness over the valleys of the Emyn Muil (TT.98)." This could be weather conditions or an ability of Sauron hampering magical sight, or perhaps Gandalf was gaining his information from Gwaihir the Windlord. It is not clear which things Gandalf perceived for himself and which Gwaihir informed him of: "Some things he has seen, and others I have seen myself (*ibid*)."

A perhaps more definite example of such power occurs in Fangorn. While talking about the Ring and what to do, "[Gandalf] gazed out eastward, shading his eyes, as if he saw things far away that none of them could see. Then he shook his head. 'No', he said in a soft voice, it has gone beyond our reach' (TT.103)." Of course Gandalf could not have been aware of the exact location and situation of Frodo and Sam, or he would not have been so eager to speak to Faramir upon the latter's arrival in Minas Tirith.

Galadriel also says she demonstrates a similar, though less powerful, form of scrying ability: "I say to you, Frodo, that even as I speak to you, I perceive the Dark Lord and know his mind, or all of his mind that concerns the Elves. And he gropes ever to see me and my thought. But still the door is closed (FotR.380)!" It is implied that this ability comes from Nenya. Perhaps scrying, including perceiving the mind of another, and its thoughts, are expressions of power not associated with the magic of Elves (with its source in the reflected power of the greater Ainur in Ëa, the Valar), but with the direct power of the Ainur, such as would be inherent in Sauron, a Maia.

Transmitting Thought

While Frodo is wearing the One upon Amon Hen, and he realises Sauron is searching for him, he heard Gandalf shout in his mind (though he did not know who it was at the tune): "Take it off! Take it off! Fool, take it off! Take off the Ring (FotR.417)!" There is another case of where the minds of these two appear to have connected over a

great distance: "[Gandalf's] thought was ever upon Frodo and Samwise, over the long leagues his mind sought for them in hope and pity. Maybe Frodo felt it, not knowing it, as he had upon Amon Hen, even though he believed that Gandalf was gone, gone forever into the shadow in Moria far away (TT.253)."

Sauron is also able to communicate mentally, as demonstrated by his ordering of the Nazgûl towards Orodruin when he becomes aware of Frodo's presence, and intent, at the Sammath Naur. Upon the removal of his attention, Sauron's forces attacking those of the West at the Morannon lost heart: "The Power that drove them on and filled them with hate and fury was wavering, its will was removed from them (RotK.226)." This suggests that not only could Sauron communicate direct thoughts to a number of subordinates, but that his will could transmit determination and modify the emotions of a huge number of people (in this case Men and Orcs).

As only Gandalf and Sauron appear to exhibit this ability, it is presumably, like mind reading, a power inherent in the Ainur, and not usable by others (unless able to use a magical object with this power).

Animal Communication

Peregrin, talking to Aragorn in Rhudaur asked, "where did you learn such tales? The birds and the beasts do not tell tales of that sort (FotR.214)." Whether this suggests that animals have the ability to speak with people, or vice versa is open to question. However, there are plenty of more definite examples of communication between animals and people.

There is evidence to suggest that the *mearas*, the horses of the Mark, had some ability to understand human speech and thought. Perhaps this was only a legend, but Éomer said that "the sire of [the race of *mearas*] was the great horse of Eorl that knew the speech of Men (TT.38)." Gandalf seems to have been able to communicate -with them: "Soon the other horses came up and stood quietly by, as if awaiting orders. 'We go at once to Meduseld, the hall of your master, Théoden', said Gandalf, addressing them gravely. They bowed their heads (TT.108)."

The Nazgûl have a great power to instil uneasiness, fear and despair through their presence.

If they did understand him, this could have been a power of empathy with animals, magical or otherwise, on Gandalf's part, or an ability of the *mearas*, or both. The evidence for Gandalf's communication with Shadowfax at a distance indisputably demonstrates that it was magical, involving thought transference, as well as animal communication. Gandalf: "I bent my thought upon him, bidding him to make haste; for yesterday he was far away in the south of this land (*ibid*)." Earlier Gandalf says that "a great friendship has grown between us, and if I have the need he will come at my call (FotR.278)."

Legolas also demonstrates some ability with the horse Arod while at the beginning of the Paths of the Dead. Arod was so afraid he refused to enter, "then Legolas laid his hands on his eyes and sang some words that went soft in the gloom, until he suffered himself to be led (RotK.60)."

Gandalf may have demonstrated an ability to communicate with animals at other points. At the west gate of Moria he "laid his hand on the pony's head, and spoke in a low voice. 'Go with words of guard and guiding on you' (FotR.317)." He then told the pony to go to places where there was grass, and so on to Rivendell, which they much later found out he had done. This is also an expression of the frequent importance of words in conscious magic usage, and of magic for protection. Of course, he may have been expressing poetic license, but Frodo's song about Gandalf, written in Lorien, may offer more information: "with bird on bough and beast in den, in their own secret tongues he spoke (FotR.375)."

Radagast is the character most associated with animals in LotR. Upon meeting Radagast on the southern border of the Shire, before travelling to Isengard, Gandalf asked Radagast to "send out messages to all the beasts and birds that are your friends (FotR.309)" on the matter of the Nazgûl to Orthanc. This implies that he had the ability to communicate, at least indirectly through other animals, with various creatures.

Saruman or Sauron are presumably also able to communicate with birds. While the Company was travelling south from Rivendell, Aragorn felt that Hollin was being watched, and that *crebain* (from Dunland and Fangorn), plus black crows and hawks could all be spies (FotR.298). However, some of these may have been sent by Radagast to send messages to Orthanc, not yet knowing of Saruman's treachery.

The Power of Presence

Various characters exhibit a power due to their presence, which has both positive and negative effects. At the battle of the Hornburg, Aragorn spoke to the enemy from the wall:

...so great a power and royalty was revealed in Aragorn, ad he stood there alone above the ruined gated before the host of his enemies, that many of the wild men paused, and looked back over their shoulders to the valley, and some looked up doubtfully at the sky. But the orcs laughed with loud voices. (TT. 145)

His presence had an effect on the 'wild men' but not on Orcs. 'Royalty' is a significant word here, suggesting that maybe it is his lineage that is responsible for his imposing effect, which might be more easily perceivable by Men than Orcs.

As Gandalf approached the forces of Isengard in front of Helm's Deep on Shadowfax: "the White Rider was upon them, and the terror of his coming filled the enemy with madness (TT. 147)." While watching Gandalf and Denethor apparently locked in a battle of will: "by a sense other than sight Pippin perceived that Gandalf had the greater power and the deeper wisdom, and a majesty that was veiled (RotK.29)." In Minas Tirith, during the battle: "wherever he came men's hearts would lift again, and the winged shadows pass from memory (RotK.98)." This could be simply the psychological effect of his presence, or perhaps a magical aura which has a palpable effect on the mind.

The Nazgûl have a great power to instil uneasiness, fear and despair through their presence. As the people who are afflicted with these feelings often do not know what they are, or even sometimes cannot see them, this cannot merely be a non-magical, psychological effect. Presumably their undead nature gives them a power to effect living beings merely through proximity. Aragorn says to the Hobbits: "we can feel their presence - it troubled our hearts, as soon as we came here, and before we saw them (FotR.202)." The effect is also mentioned as a "sense of present evil (FotR.212)." When searching for them, after the Ford of Bruinen attack, "nowhere was their presence to be felt (FotR.288)." While the Riders of Rohan were returning from Isengard

one passed overhead: "At that moment a shadow fell over them. The bright moonlight seemed to be suddenly cut off. Several of the Riders cried out, and crouched, holding their arms above their heads, as if to ward off a blow from above: a blind fear and a deadly cold fell on them (TT.201)." Here they were affected by both fear and cold at presumably a considerable distance if the Nazgûl was flying and not detected until immediately above them.

The Witch-king seemed to have a particularly powerful effect. A messenger describing the attack across the Anduin said that: "few will stand and abide even the rumour of his coming. His own folk quail at him, and they would slay themselves at his bidding (RotK.91)." As Frodo, Sam and Gollum approached Minas Morgul: "Every step was reluctant, and tune seemed to slow its pace, so that between the raising of a foot and the setting of it down minutes of loathing passed (TT.312-313)." Though this could be partly due to their knowledge of evil present in the city, it is probably mostly an effect of the presence of the Lord of the Nazgûl and the other evil that lurked there.

When he signalled for Grond to be used on the gate of Minas Tirith, during the battle: "[The Lord of the Nazgûl] held up a pale sword. And as he did so a great fear fell on all, defender and foe alike; and the hands of men drooped to their sides, and no bow sang. For a moment all was still (RotK.102)." He must inspire incredible fear, for everyone on that area of the battlefield to stop everything. This has to be magical, as it effects horses too, when there is no apparent specific danger from him (RotK.l 15). While near him Merry was affected greatly: "such a horror was on him that he was blind and sick (*ibid*)." Presumably the Lord of the Nazgûl was no more undead than the others, so his more powerful presence must be due to his greater magical powers and possibly his greater strength of will. This suggests that other very powerful evil magic users may emanate a presence that is felt in a similar way.

Other creatures may also radiate a palpable presence. Concerning the Huorns in front of Helm's Deep, Legolas said to Gandalf: "I feel a great wrath about me. Do you not feel the air throb in your ears? (TT.151)." Elves are probably more sensitive to such emotional emanations than Dwarves or Men.

EVIL MAGIC AND CORRUPTION

The Morgoth-element

The source of all evil power in Arda that cannot be attributed to the personal power of corrupted Ainur, comes from Morgoth. In a footnote to an essay titled 'Melkor Morgoth' Tolkien says "One of the reasons for [Morgoth's] self-weakening is that he has given to his 'creatures', Orcs, Balrogs, etc. power of recuperation and multiplication. So that they will gather again without further specific orders. Part of his native creative power has gone out into making an independent evil growth out of his control (HoMeX.391)."

In the 'Annals of Aman' this is also referred to: "For as he grew in malice, and sent forth from himself the evil that he conceived in lies and creatures of wickedness, his power passed into them and was dispersed (*ibid*. 133)." So this is presumably the source of evil magic for all Morgoth's minions. The evil Ainur, such as Sauron and the Balrogs, already have personal power through their nature, but this was enhanced by Morgoth's power:

> *Sauron's, relatively smaller, power was concentrated;Morgoth's vast power was disseminated. The whole of Middle-earth' was Morgoth's Ring It was this Morgoth-element in matter, indeed, which was a prerequisite for such 'magic' and other evils as Sauron practiced with it and upon it.* (*ibid*.400)

The Nature of Evil

Evil is not innate in a being in Arda. Elrond says: "nothing is evil in the beginning. Even Sauron was not so (FotR.281)." Corruption must be what leads to evil in all cases-corruption through certain thoughts, motivations and deeds.

> "nothing is evil in the beginning. Even Sauron was not so."

Gandalf refers to the 'arts of the Enemy' (FotR.270). This is presumably magical specialisms and knowledge. Faramir refers to 'the black arts' and 'evil arts' (TT.286) and mentions corruption as becoming "enamoured of the Darkness and the black arts (*ibid*)."

This may express the idea that magic is seen as an 'art' - a subject of scholarly study rather than as something technical. This would suggest that it is something personal, with different powers depending upon the individual learning, and not easily reducible to universally applicable game mechanics. However, in various places Tolkien uses similes and descriptions which imply that evil magic is in some ways unnatural and alike to mechanisms and artificial devices.

In the *Letters* discussion on magic (See p. 4 above.), Tolkien makes the distinction between magic which affects the physical world or mind actively (*magia*), and the mind or senses in more subtle ways, such as illusion (*goeteia*). He says that no magic is inherently good or evil, but that it depends on how it's used - the motive. Evil effects of *magia* are controlling free will (so including mind control and brainwashing) and controlling and manipulating the environment in a destructive way. *Magia* can be likened to technology - with consequent good and bad effects, again primarily vis-à-vis the environment.

The important idea here is that of 'control', both of people and objects. The ultimate evil is that of taking away free will, and in the desire to possess. The significance for PCs is in their motive for using power - whether it be magical or otherwise. If it involves the desire for control or possession, the likelihood of their being corrupted, and even co-opted to Sauron's purposes, is greatly increased.

Mindless obedience characterises followers of evil. Mental slavery, total lack of free will, is even to be found in the greatest of Sauron's servants, the Nazgûl. They have only the mind of their leader, the Witch-king: "their voices, which uttered only his - will and his malice, were filled with evil and horror (RotK.94)," who is himself totally dominated by Sauron.

Reflecting Tolkien's strong connection to the natural world, evil has a distinct relationship to nature, consisting only of using and manipulating, as with people. There is no appreciation for beauty and presumably culture, as evil seems only capable of appreciating power and strength. Nan Curunír, the Wizard's Vale, where Saruman dwells, had once been "fair and green," but "it was not so now....A wilderness of weeds and thorns" the vale was full of the stumps of cut-down trees and "rank grasses (TT.159)."

In becoming corrupt and turning to 'evil' Saruman decided to exploit whatever resources were at his disposal, regardless of the environmental consequences. Ithilien Frodo and Sam found

to be "a land that had only been for a few years under the dominion of the Dark Lord and was not yet fallen wholly into decay (TT.258)," in stark contrast to the bleak and poisoned destruction that they had just experienced in front of the Morannon.

The presence of evil, long-term, can warp, or corrupt, nature. Around Minas Morgul and its stream: "wide flats lay on either bank, shadowy meads filled with pale white flowers. Luminous these were too, beautiful and yet horrible of shape, like the demented forms in an uneasy dream; and they gave forth a faint sickening charnel-smell; an odour of rottenness filled the air (TT.313)." Evil is also associated with use of mechanical devices, things that appear to go against nature and are purely destructive. Examples are the explosives used by Saruman's troops at Helm's Deep, and by Sauron's forces at the Rammas Echor.

Then there is the association with certain forms. Gollum, while feeling pity for Frodo and Sam, just before he lead them into Shelob's lair, appeared like "an old weary hobbit," then when he returned to his old self when challenged by Sam, he looked "almost spider-like (TT.324)." Perhaps an evil will can even be perceived, if powerful enough. When passing an opening in the passage near Shelob's lair, out of it "came a reek so foul, and a sense of lurking malice so intense, that Frodo reeled (TT.328)."

Corruption

In an essay called 'Notes on Motives in the Silmarillion' Tolkien discusses the origin of corruption in Middle-earth, and the nature of Sauron's desires:

Sauron was 'greater', effectively, in the Second Age than Morgoth at the end of the First. Why? Because, though he was far smaller by natural stature, he had not yet fallen so low. Eventually he also squandered his power (of being) in the endeavour to gain control of others. But he was not obliged to expend so much of himself. To gain domination over Arda, Morgoth had let most of his being pass into the physical constituents of the Earth - hence all things that were born on Earth and lived on and by it, beasts or plants or incarnate spirits, were liable to be 'stained'. Sauron, however, inherited the 'corruption' of Arda, and only spent his (much more limited) power on the Rings; for it was the creatures of earth, in their minds and wills, that he desired to dominate. (HoME XII.394-395)

So the attempt to gain domination over others, whether physically or mentally, is costly. Morgoth's endeavours cost him more as he wanted total (physical and mental and spiritual) domination, and presumably the existence of the Morgoth-element in Arda Marred made Sauron's job that much easier - all things had the inherent potential to become corrupted, and there was an external evil power source to draw upon.

Elrond says that "it is perilous to study too deeply the arts of the Enemy, for good or for ill (FotR.278)." So here motivation isn't so important, the very nature of what is studied itself is likely to lead to corruption. Presumably then, magic can be innate (in a 'good' or 'evil' creature) or can be learnt in the form of sorcery, with its inherent dangers. Gandalf said that: "Saruman has long studied the arts of the Enemy himself...It was by the devices of Saruman that we drove him from Dol Guldur (FotR.270)."

Perhaps these 'devices' consist of the same evil magic that Sauron himself uses. The Mouth of Sauron was probably also corrupted through evil magic, as he "learned great sorcery" after he "entered the service of the Dark Tower (RotK. 164)." Becoming enamoured of 'Evil knowledge' is referred to as what led the Black Númenóreans to worship Sauron (*ibid*).

The moral failing of the desire for possession is one of the most frequently corrupting influences in Arda. This can be for the possession of objects or power. An important distinction between Saruman and Gandalf, which indicates the former was more prone to corruption, was his desire to possess, expressed most obviously by Orthanc and the *palantír*, whereas Gandalf was 'the grey wanderer' with no permanent home or possessions, save his staff.

The moral failing of the desire for possession is one of the most frequently corrupting influences in Arda

Those concerned with the skill of creating powerful magic are often the most easily corrupted. Both Sauron and Saruman were followers of Aulë, and Fëanor and his sons became corrupted, though in a different way, by desire for the Silmarils. Objects with 'magic' powers or properties are very closely associated with corruption in all ages of Middle-earth. Not only are the One Ring and the Silmarils good examples, but there are also the Seven and the Nine, where the desire for possession and power respectively lead to corruption. This occurred especially with the Nine, rather than the Seven due to the extra issue involved. In attempting to become immortal the Nine Men were committing the sacrilege of trying to overcome Eru's Gift of Mortality to the Second-born.

There is also the moral element of *choice* involved in corruption. This is a common theme in LotR, where no one is 'forced' into corruption. They always make the free choice to follow one path or another. For example, the One did not force Boromir into attacking Frodo. Instead it worked upon his desires and personality to manipulate him into attempting to seize it. Gollum had the Ring for a long time, but didn't use it much for most of the time he had it (hadn't needed to use it much under the mountain, as it was so dark), so Gandalf felt there was still some slight hope of his recovering psychologically from its effects.

This may be the reason why he had never 'faded' despite his long possession of the Ring (FotR.64). Still, according to Gandalf, "the thing was eating his mind and the torment had become almost unbearable (*ibid*)." However, Gandalf told Frodo that it would corrupt virtually any keeper, no matter how powerful. Yet good intentions and infrequency of use slows the progression of the corruption and control: "it will be slow, slow to evil, if you keep it with that purpose (FotR.71)." The element of choice may appear to be removed here, but 'temptation' is the important idea. Both Gandalf and Galadriel were tempted by the power of the Ring, but resisted it.

One result of corruption, even when an individual believes they still have independence of action, is to lose that freedom. Wholly, like the Mouth of Sauron, or partially like Saruman: "Saruman had slowly shaped [Orthanc] to his shifting purposes, and made it better, as he thought, being deceived -for all those arts and subtle devices, for which he forsook his former wisdom, and which fondly he imagined were his own, came but from Mordor; so that what he made was naught, only a little copy, a child's model or a slave's flattery of...Barad-dûr (TT.160-161)." A good reason to hide any abilities.

There do not appear to be any examples of non-Ainurin magic users in Third Age Middle-earth who have

'learned' to use magic without becoming corrupted. Many beings possess magic innately, as part of the nature of their race, such as (at least Noldorin) Elves, Istari, the Balrog, Sauron, Tom Bombadil, and perhaps Shelob. Also, Aragorn possesses great powers of mentalism due to his lineage and descent from Lúthien. The other magic users, such as the Lord of the Nazgûl and the Mouth of Sauron, have become corrupted by learning magic, as did Saruman.

It could be said, however, that their corruption came from the nature of the magic they learned, rather than by the act of learning magic itself. This distinction may be irrelevant, though, if only evil or sorcerous magic can be learned. This may explain why all magic users who have learned their magic are evil. Part of Tolkien's moral proscription against desire for possession and accumulation of power is that personal power is usually something that an individual is born with.

Therefore most magic is innate, and passed on through blood. It is immoral to wish to accumulate power beyond what is rightfully yours by birth - either as a racial inheritance or through lineage. Tolkien plainly sees a moral right, which legitimises a legal right, in inheriting power and possessions (such as Aragorn's power and claim on the thrones of Arnor and Gondor).

The one possible exception to learning magic and becoming corrupted is Gandalf. The fact that he says he used to know "every spell in all the tongues of Elves or Men or Orcs (FotR.366)" for opening secret doors, may indicate that he learned them, but perhaps his wisdom and strength of character enabled him, unlike Saruman, to resist to lure to corruption. This is especially plausible as Gandalf was the one character who most exemplified Tolkien's morality as regards power and possession. Tolkien suggests that one of the reasons Saruman desired to live at Orthanc was so he could gain use of the *palantír* there, and this he used for personal benefit (UT.422-423). Gandalf was given Narya, the Ring of Fire, by Círdan, and he only made use of its powers at great need, and never for personal gain (UT.406).

Perhaps only a PC or NPC of Gandalf's moral character would be able to overcome the lure to corruption through learning magic. The corrupting influence of accumulation of other forms of power, such as political, and material (objects and wealth), should also be kept in mind. Such elements as corruption do not have to be reduced to mere numbers and game mechanics however. A GM can present progressively more limited choices of action and behaviour to a PC as the consequences of the desire for accumulation of possessions and power, and actions in pursuit of it, increasingly affect one's personality.

Evil vs. Elvish Magic

In *Letters* Tolkien differentiates evil magic from Elvish enchantment on the basis of their respective aims. He says that sub-creative desire and/or rebelling against the laws, or natural restraints, of the creator (especially against mortality):

... will lead to the desire for Power, for making the will more quickly effective, - and so to the Machine (or Magic). By the last I intend all use of external plans or devices (apparatus) instead of development of the inherent inner powers or talents - or even the use of the these talents with the corrupted motive of dominating: bulldozing the real world, or coercing other wills. The machine is our more obvious modern form though more closely related to Magic than is usually recognised.

I have not used 'magic' consistently, and indeed the Elven-queen Galadriel is obliged to remonstrate with the Hobbits on their confused use of the word both for the devices and operations of the Enemy, and for those of the Elves. I have not, because there is not a word for the latter (since all human stories have suffered the same confusion). But the Elves are there, (in my tales) to demonstrate the difference. Their 'magic' is Art, delivered from many of its human limitations: more effortless, more quick, more complete (product, and vision in unflawed correspondence). And its object is Art not Power, sub-creation not domination and tyrannous re-forming of Creation. (Let. 145-146)

Darkness and shadows are metaphors frequently used to refer to forces of evil, especially Sauron.

Light and Darkness

Light is almost always associated with good, in the sense of the Valar, and the fight against their enemies, primarily Morgoth and Sauron. Starlight in particular is connected with Elbereth and the Elves. Examples are the Noldor revering the stars and starlight, and Eärendil using the light of a Silmaril to find his way to Aman. Orcs and Trolls hate sunlight, Elvish and Númenórean swords glow near Orcs, and the combat between the Balrog and Gandalf may be seen as a fight of light against fire. Sauron's encroachment of power and influence is known as 'the Shadow' (FotR.355). Morgoth hated light so much he toppled the pillars of the lamps of Illuin and Ormal (Sil.36), and persuaded Ungoliant to destroy the Two Trees of Valinor, Telperion and Laurelin (Sil.76). This hatred of Morgoth s is reflected in all his minions, and its juxtaposition with the Light symbolising the struggle of their enemies against the encroachment of their Darkness.

Darkness and shadows are metaphors frequently use to refer to forces of evil, especially Sauron. As Frodo was gazing from atop Cerin Amroth in Lórien, towards Dol Guldur: "A black cloud lies often over it of late. In this high place you may see the two powers that are opposed one to another; and ever they strive now in thought, but whereas the light perceives the very heart of the darkness, its own secret has not been discovered' (FotR.366)." This might indicate that magical darkness and shadows are by nature evil, or at least only created by evil magic users. This appears to hold in most cases, however, the Valar did surround Aman with 'the Shadowy Seas' (Sil.248), which Eärendil needed the light of a Silmaril to pierce.

Gollum's hatred of, especially, sunlight is reminiscent of the attitude of Orcs. Gollum's feelings could be based merely on having lived underground so long, or because natural light is seen as 'good'. He seems to have hated sunlight before he entered the Misty Mountains, so its probably the latter. A green light appears in his eyes when the Gollum side of his personality is ascendant. The first time Sam sees this, though there is no indication that he was aware of it, was when he overheard the two sides talking: "a pale light and a green light alternated in his eyes as he spoke (TT.303)." As they approach Cirith Ungol the light becomes more constant and intense with evil anticipation as he thinks of nearing the place of his planned treachery and revenge. So this light presumably represents evil intent and thoughts, and an evil individual's eyes are one element about them associated with light.

Pale light is seen with other evil beings. Although they hate sunlight, and

it weakens them, some of the Nazgûl's possessions are associated with dim light. The Morgul Lord in one hand "held a long sword, and in the other a knife; both the knife and the hand that held it glowed with a pale light (FoR.208)." While marching out of Minas Morgul, the Witch-king had on his head "a helm like a crown that flickered with a perilous light (TT.315)." It seems that when light is associated with evil it is virtually always weak, and often a lurid colour, such as green or red.

Shelob is the creature in LotR most associated with darkness. Whereas Sauron has other facets to his power and nature, Shelob is portrayed as almost a reification of darkness. She is described as 'weaving webs of shadow' and 'her vomit darkness' (TT.332). She has had a powerful effect on Gollum: "years before, Gollum had beheld her, Smeagol who pried into all dark holes, and in dark days he had bowed and worshipped her, and the darkness of her evil will walked through all the ways of his weariness beside him, cutting him off from light and from regret (TT.332-333)." As a virtual personification of the darkness that he constantly sought, it would be natural for him to worship her (despite his hatred of her and everything else).

It can be difficult to use such power, even for the right reasons, and not be tempted to do so for some personal gain.

As a powerful expression of the power of light, the phial of Galadriel is diametrically opposed to Shelob. As the light of the phial was exposed in front of Shelob, "[her eyes] wavered....One by one they dimmed, and slowly they drew back. No brightness so deadly had ever afflicted them before (TT.330)." Light can also be used to attack and harm, such as when the phial's light intensified as Sam's courage returned upon confronting her: "it flamed like a star that leaping from the firmament sears the dark air with intolerable light. No such terror out of heaven had ever burned in Shelob's face before. The beams of it entered into her wounded head and scored it with unbearable pain, and the dreadful infection of light spread from eye to eye (TT.339)."

The phial was responsive to the emotions of its wielder, becoming brighter as their determination grew (TT.329), reflecting the individualism associated with 'good', as opposed to the mindless obedience with no independence of thought allowed to the minions of evil. However, the light of the phial did not have everything its own way. There exist darknesses which it would take even greater power to overcome. Shelob's webs may be the source of one such darkness: "[Frodo] saw a greyness which the radiance of the star-glass did not pierce and did not illuminate, as if it were a shadow that being cast by no light, no light could dissipate (TT.331)."

Evil Magic Use

Whereas nature is enhanced and preserved through the culture and enchantments of the Elves in northwest Middle-earth, evil powers seek to manipulate and control nature. Sauron's Darkness, that was caused to cover Gondor, was a manipulation of the weather. From Minas Tirith the Darkness could be seen as "a great cloud [that] streamed slowly westward from the Black Land, devouring light, borne upon a wind of war (RotK.80)." If the harsh weather atop Caradhras was caused by Sauron, as Gimli seemed to think, then his manipulation of the weather, even in a localised way, was extensive in range.

The signal to Minas Morgul from Mordor that the Witch-king's army may depart, witnessed by Frodo, Sam and Gollum, suggest that Sauron was able to cause eruptions from Orodruin (TT.315). Fire in the trenches on the Pelennor Fields may have been created magically: "each was filled with fire, though how it was kindled or fed, by art or devilry, none could see (RotK.95)." The catapulted skulls bursting into flame as they landed in Minas Tirith may also have been magical (RotK.96).

'Devilry' may refer to the source of the magic rather than its nature, as the creation of fire magically is not by itself seen as evil. This may relate back to Tolkien's comments on magic as not being inherently good or evil but the use to which it is put can be, so both the corrupt and uncorrupted may create the same effects, but the motivation, and source in the Morgoth-element may indicate the difference.

Through the Minas Ithil *palantír*, Sauron uses powers of the mind and will to deceive Denethor and manipulate Saruman. Also, during their pursuit of the orcs over Rohan, Aragorn said: "I am weary as I have seldom been before, weary as no Ranger should be with a clear trail to follow. There is some will that lends speed to our foes and sets an unseen barrier before us: a weariness that is in the heart more than in the limb (TT.30)." Legolas agreed and seemed to feel that Saruman was the source of the feeling.

The threat of explicitly evil manipulation is made by the Lord of Nazgûl in threatening Éowyn: "thy flesh shall be devoured, and thy shrivelled mind be left naked to the Lidless Eye (RotK. 116)." So both major powers of evil use power to manipulate the minds or hearts of their enemies directly, something which by its nature is usually evil. It can be difficult to use such power, even for the right reasons, and not be tempted to do so for some personal gain.

The Lord of the Nazgûl and the Mouth of Sauron are known to be sorcerers but there may have been many to whom Black Arts were taught to aid in their work for Sauron. Reference is made to an evil folk in Rhudaur, who are described as 'workers of sorcery', in the fourteenth century of the Third Age (HoMe XII.194). Such people may also have used their evil magic for their own personal benefit, and it is possible that there are a number of sorcerers around during the Third, and perhaps Second Age in Middle-earth.

LANGUAGE, SPEECH AND SONG

Language

Language can have a considerable effect on listeners, from the beauty and wonder associated with Quenya, to the horror of Black Speech. With Quenya its properties are a result of the Eldarin relationship to memory and preservation. Its power to express this relationship may come from Quenya's reputed origins in Valarin, the language of the Valar. This would fit with the notion that Elvish powers of enchantment originate in their proximity to the Valar, while dwelling in Aman.

For example, while the Company was departing in their boats, Frodo could hear Galadriel singing: "Now she sang in the ancient tongue of the Elves beyond the Sea, and he did not understand the words. Yet as is the way of Elvish words, they remained graven in his memory, and long afterwards he interpreted them, as well as he could (FotR.393)."

This suggests a considerable power in Quenya to aid in, at least words in that

language, being retained in memory. Language may be seen as one of the media in which the Eldar express their innate 'powers' that are interpreted by others as enchantment or 'magic', just as their dwellings and objects they make are imbued with properties beyond what Mannish cultures consider normal. Words in Quenya also came to Frodo's mind, inspired by the light of the phial of Galadriel, when confronted by Shelob: "*Aiya Eärendil Elenion Ancalima!* He cried, and knew not what he had spoken (TT.329)," suggesting a greater power than memory being involved.

Quenya words with holy (i.e., Valarin) associations have power to cause fear and maybe even harm to the Nazgûl, especially that of one of the Noldorin Elves' chief patrons, Elbereth. 'O Elbereth! Gilthoniel' shouted by Frodo during the attack upon Weathertop was the primary cause of the Witch-King's 'shrill cry' (FotR.208). According to Aragorn, "more deadly to him [than Frodo's knife] was the name of Elbereth (FotR.210)." However, not all evil creatures are so affected. When Frodo cried in front of Shelob the phrase mentioned in the last paragraph, Tolkien said that: "she that walked in the darkness had heard the Elves cry that cry far back in the deeps of time, and she had not heeded it, and it did not daunt her now (TT.329)."

Minions of Morgoth and Sauron, as servants of those opposed to the Valar, may thereby be affected by an expression of their power, through the speaking of the name of one associated with light, and spoken in Quenya, a language whose power originated in Aman. It may be that as an independent force of evil Shelob did not see herself as a direct enemy of the Valar, indeed she was probably unaware of their existence, and was thereby unaffected by the power of names associated with them.

Just as languages associated with the power of Aman may have special properties, so too may those of Darkness. While Gandalf was reading the Black Speech Ring inscription in Rivendell: "the change in the wizard's voice was astounding. Suddenly it became menacing, powerful, harsh as stone. A shadow seemed to pass over the high sun, and the porch for a moment grew dark. All trembled, and the Elves stopped their ears (FotR.267)."

The effect here could be just psychological, as the memories associated with its usage for those having heard it spoken by Sauron's minions and its harsh sounds to those who'd never heard it. However, there could be some actual evil magical power inherent in the language. If so this most likely has its origins in the Morgoth-element. Morgoth's power that was dispersed among his minions, and then in the whole of Arda, could be expressed through media associated with Morgoth's legacy.

Another instance of Gandalf expressing power through language is while the Company is on a hill in Hollin, surrounded by wargs. "Stooping like a cloud, he lifted a burning branch and strode to meet the wolves ....High in the air he tossed the burning brand. It flared with a sudden white radiance like lightning, and his voice rolled like thunder. *Naur an edraith ammen! Naur dan i ngaurhoth!* He cried (FotR.312)." Gandalf could have been using Sindarin as the language in which the 'spell' was created, or because vocalising his desire while externalising power may help to focus it. The 'cried' may also indicate that intonation is important in using spells', or merely expresses Gandalf's emotions at the time.

As only the Istari or evil magic users appear to use magic overtly, that is in the form of consciously cast spells, Gandalf's use of Sindarin here may not have much relevance to other, uncorrupted or non-Ainurin, users of magic in terms of its relationship to learned magic. However, it may be seen as another example of the relationship between language and magic.

Speech

Much magical power is expressed through individual words, such as Elbereth, and phrases in, especially, Quenya. There are various other examples. Aragorn, in attempting to heal Frodo's Morgul-wound spoke words to Frodo "in a soft tone (FotR.210)." Gandalf attempting to open the West-gate of Moria through use of magic: "many times he repeated these words in different order, or varied them. Then he tried other spells, one after another, speaking now faster and louder, now-soft and slow. Then he spoke many single words of Elvish speech (FotR.320)." This suggests that, at least for overt expressions of magic, speech manipulation in terms of volume and speed may be necessary for particular spells to work, or at the least they help to modify effects.

Perhaps comparable to Gandalf's 'words of Command', the Witch-king uses 'words of power'. During the Battle of the Pelennor Fields, while directing the attack on the gate of Minas Tirith, he "cried aloud in a dreadful voice, speaking in some forgotten tongue words of power and terror to rend both heart and stone (RotK.102)." The language element here may be important in the nature or power of the effect.

Speech is also capable of affecting the mind of a listener. When Tom Bombadil made a vague reference to the rangers, the Hobbits had a vision including a man with "a star on his brow (FotR. 157)," obviously Aragorn, who they had not yet met. The power of Saruman's voice to persuade and influence one's thoughts is another example of this. Of course, both uses are by Maiar, and so only those with great innate powers may be thought to be able to influence others in such ways.

Song

Song is another medium for expression of magical power. The most powerful act ever, the creation of Arda, was accomplished by a song, the Ainulindalë, The Music of the Amur, and this may explain the power of singing in Middle-earth. Aragorn sang "a slow song in a strange tongue (FR.210)" over the Morgul-knife that Frodo was wounded with, possibly to understand it better, in an attempt at healing the wound. While at the beginning of the Paths of the Dead, Arod, the Rohirrim horse ridden by Legolas and Gimli, was so afraid he refused to enter, "then Legolas laid his hands on his eyes and sang some words that went soft in the gloom, until he suffered himself to be led (RotK.60)."

Song seems to be a large component in Tom Bombadil's power. He sings to Old Man Willow to help in getting the Hobbits free, and he is constantly singing as he goes about his business in the Forest. Considering the incredible significance of singing in the very creation of Arda there is great scope for developing singing as a central component of magic use in Middle-earth, both overt and innate.

OTHER ASPECTS OF MAGIC

There are various other aspects of 'magic' which space does not allow for an analysis of here. However, I will briefly discuss a few of the more interesting and mystical.

- Oaths and Curses – Isildur's curse on the Oathbreakers was so powerful that the spirits of whole tribes of Men stayed on in Middle-earth for thousands of years, despite Ilúvatar's Gift

of Mortality usually preventing this. The source of the authority for this can be seen as some primordial power innate in oaths, or curses, coupled with the might of a descendant of Lúthien. However, it may have been the will of Ilúvatar at work, part of his grand design for Arda, to bring his plans to fruition.

- Fate and Divine Intervention – This may be Ilúvatar's limited form of intervention, so as not to interfere with the free will of those involved. Gandalf explained to Frodo that Bilbo was 'meant' to find the Ring, and the master of Rivendell told those present at the Council of Elrond: "that is the purpose for which you are called hither. Called, I say, though I have not called you to me, strangers from distant lands. Came and are here met, in this very nick of time, by chance as it may seem. Yet it is not so. Believe rather that it is so ordered that we, who sit here, and none others, must now find council for the peril of the world (FotR.255)." There is ample room here for all sorts of subtle GM tampering, depending upon his or her interpretation of the will of Ilúvatar.
- Dreams and Premonition - A particularly mystical area of 'magic' is dreams. On more than one occasion Frodo dreams of scenes and events he has never seen. Boromir and Faramir both receive a message in a dream, indicating that they should go somewhere they had never even heard of. Frodo clearly dreamed of Orthanc and Gandalf's escape, visualised accurately. This is not only of events which he didn't yet know about, but of a place he had never seen (FotR. 138). Obviously magical, and of a situation in the recent past. Even Gandalf was 'astonished' when told by Frodo during the Council of Elrond. Another example concerns his dreaming of the Nazgûl attack on Crickhollow while asleep in Bree (FotR.189). Perhaps his possession of the One gave him unbidden access to the ability to perceive things he was concerned about. It can be inferred that Aragorn had this ability in his comment to Gandalf about entering Moria, and in his words to Éomer upon their parting in Rohan about meeting on the Pelennor Fields. Pippin had a waking vision of his friends while being force marched by the Orcs (TT.57). This may also apply to Faramir's seeing Boromir dead in a boat (TT.27-4). Isildur appeared to predict the future upon speaking to the king of the Oathbreakers (RotK.55). Also, Malbeth, Arthadan seer at the time of the last king, Arvedui, predicted that the Witch-king would not be killed by any man, and that an heir of Isildur would call the Oathbreakers to fulfil their oath after passing through the Paths of the Death (RotK.54).

CONCLUSIONS

The following are what I feel are the most important aspects of magic in the Third Age to come out of this analysis.

1) The source of all 'good' magic is the Valar. The Eldar who dwelt with the Valar in Aman, the Calaquendi, gained an innate power through proximity to the holy aura of these higher Ainur. This power can be expressed as 'magic' or enchantment and is passed on to descendants, but in diminishing potency with the generations. Any magic among those Elves who did not dwell in Aman, such as the Sindar, or perhaps even the Avari, can be explained by their later living in proximity to the Exiled Noldor and gaining from their aura. Any magic among the Edain is to be found in those descended from an Elf, or Lúthien, in the latter case gaining from the descended power of one who was herself the daughter of a Maia.

2) All evil magic has its origins in the Morgoth-element, and thereby 'Arda Marred', or another corrupt Ainu. In the latter case the learning involved, such as that of the Mouth of Sauron, may be from Sauron, or in the First Age, Morgoth, teaching others how to access and manipulate the power of the Morgoth-element that became inherent in Arda.

3) Virtually all magic that would be available to characters is innate, assuming they meet the requirements mentioned above. If learned, then they would need to have great strength of will, and initial power, or risk corruption. Most magic that is experienced by characters is likely to be sensory in nature, subtle in effects, and most likely involving the mind directly in some way.

4) Magical objects are rare and often their use requires considerable power from the wielder, and even then they risk harm. They may appear to be one way for individuals with little innate power to attain more. However, magical objects of any real power in Middle-earth usually enhance the inherent or already existing power of the user proportionately. So a PC of little power would in all probability, for example, get no more use out of the One Ring than to make himself/herself invisible, while one of great might could potentially gain enough power to challenge Sauron himself. Both would, though, become corrupted. These factors should make most magical objects of limited use and very dangerous.

My general point is that the moral and conceptual framework surrounding the use of magic in Middle-earth is more important than the mechanics. A concentration on the latter robs a campaign of much of that sense of mystery, awe and wonder surrounding a character's experience of magic. Players familiar with the mechanics tend to think of spell levels, areas of effect, and resistance rolls, reducing magic to mere numbers. Given a GM willing to be creative enough to portray magic as the nebulous, intangible, and extraordinary element of Middle-earth that it is, and able to be consistent, yet unpredictable in its application, any campaign will allow its players a greater experience of Middle-earth.

TAURINAFANTO

Thomas Morwinsky:
Klemmsberg 7
D-24340 Eckernförde
Germany
(tmorwinsky@zoologie.uni-kiel.de)

What you see before you is a revised version of an adventure authored by Graham Staplehurst, which was first published in Issue 87 of White Dwarf *magazine with the title "Taurëfantô." Deviations and additions to the original text have been introduced in order to adapt the scenario to new material on Rhovanion and the Entwives devised by the authors of the* Inland Sea *realm module (OHS 5). Graham's original inspiration for the scenario came from the tale of Aldarion and Erendis in* Unfinished Tales*. I owe Graham special thanks for this interesting and intriguing adventure, which is perfect for use with the* Inland Sea*.*

The adventure is suitable for intermediate or higher level PCs. It is set in the area covered by ICE's Mirkwood *realm module and may be set at any time between TA 1050 and TA 1851. A setting just prior to the Great Plague would be most appropriate, otherwise you will have to readjust a few key events: before the Plague there existed a number of Gramiska (Gramuz) settlements south and southwest of the border of Mirkwood upon whose special cultural background the plot pivots. (See ICE's* Mirkwood*, p. 40.) For this reason, the version of the story presented here takes place in the early summer of TA 1635. (The Plague hits the region in the fall and beginning winter of that year.)*

Some of the characters and events described below are drawn from "The Perfect Seed," an adventure which will appear in the Inland Sea *module. The ICE supplements* Mirkwood *and* Dol Guldur *(and, peripherally,* Dagorlad and the Dead Marshes*) are useful for further information and references concerning the adventure area. For locating some of the places mentioned, a copy of the* Inland Sea *maps (OHS 3) might be useful as well.*

In terms of terminology I'm using the corrected names that were incorporated into this supplement. You can find all mentioned places in the regional map provided with this adventure. If you own the Inland Sea *map set you might notice a couple of structures (towns, roads etc.) on the adventure's regional map that are not present on your map set. This is because the adventure map shows the region before the Plague hit, whereas OHS 3 shows the region after the pestilence has passed. All these additional towns are then depopulated, ruined and forgotten.*

THE TALE

The Entwives

Tolkien described the Ents as being "the most ancient people surviving in the Third Age." In his translation of the Red Book of the Westmarch, he relates a conversation shared by the Hobbits Meriadoc and Peregrin with Fangorn the Ent which gave us, until recently, all the extant information regarding the Entwives:

'…the Ents gave their love to things that they met in the world... loved the great trees, and the wild woods, and the slopes of the high hills; and they drank of the mountain streams, and ate only such fruit as the trees let fall in their path... But the Entwives gave their minds to the lesser trees, and to the meads in the sunshine beyond the feet of the forests; and they saw the sloe in the thicket, and the wild apple and the cherry blossoming in spring, and the green herbs in the waterland in summer, and the seedling grasses in the autumn fields... The Entwives ordered them to grow according to their wishes, and bear leaf and fruit to their liking... So the Entwives made gardens to live in….Then when the Darkness came the Entwives crossed the Great River, and made new gardens, and tilled new fields. After the Darkness was overthrown the land of the Entwives blossomed richly, and their fields were full of corn. Many men learned the crafts of the Entwives and honoured them greatly; but we were only a legend to them, a secret in the heart of the forest.

'…long ago….we crossed the Anduin and came to their land; but we found a desert: it was all burned and uprooted, for war had passed over it. But the Entwives were not there. Long we called, and long we searched ...' (TT.79)

The Ents never discovered whence the Entwives had departed after the desecration of the Brown Lands by Sauron, and there are none surviving in Middle-earth save the oldest Ents who can still remember what the Entwives looked like. Fangorn described an Entwife thus: "Fimbrethil - very fair she was in my eyes, though little like the Entmaiden of old….Hair parched by the sun to the hue of ripe corn and cheeks like red apples (TT.79)."

An ancient scroll by the Elven poet Orodrist describes an encounter with a small group of Entwives. The tale came to our knowledge through a few Avari who wandered into the Eryn Rhûn and told it to their brethren living there. Through them it came into the West.

One stood swaying like a stand of harvested wheat, with a flared golden head and a slender body which bent gracefully with the rustling wind; another was green and sturdy and somehow leafy, like a water plantain, her pink-centered boughs and variegated veins like a delicate tracery of lace, and surrounding her was a hazy cloud of scent; the third and fourth were quite similar - tall and erect, a deep green with magnificent plumes of creamy white on their crests. These sisters resembled the great grasses of the savanna and the pampas...

Their motion was swift and fluid, like the wind rippling across afield in May. And yet something seemed to move with them below the ground; there was a tremor, like standing upon the skin of a taut drum, and a thrill passed one by. Did the earth crest and move them, as the waves of the wide ocean move banks of seaweed? I do not know. Only - I fancied that perhaps they are like unto the islands of ice I have seen in Northern Seas and Helcaraxë, whose bulk lies hidden from sight beneath the water.

Orodrist refers to the Entwives by their Grey-elven name - *Bessonodrim* - but the name he reports for the earth-spirits that serve them, the Cemincelmar, is Quenya in form, suggesting that it was derived from the Bessonodrim themselves, who are wont to use that flowing speech among themselves.

The Bessonodrim have grown much less like the Onodrim we know in Middle-earth. They have become closer to the plants they love; the plants of the water margins and the hedgerows, and most of all the cultivated plants of the field and the orchard. Also, they have grown closer to the soil and the creatures that move and dwell in it.

Just as the Onodrim are Shepherds and Masters of the Trees, so their departed and estranged spouses may be thought Farmers and Mistresses of the Soil. The Onodrim can speak to the Huorns, the spirits of the trees, wakening them and causing the wood to move. The Bessonodrim sing to the Cemincelmar, the quiescent spirits of the earth.

When the Cemincelmar hear the song of the Bessonodrim, they rise up and do their bidding. The Cemincelmar can inhabit the earth and the soil, or the myriad plants that grow close to it, or even the creatures and animals that live in the soil. Some Cemincelmar have an affinity for water and slip through streams and pools, unseen and felt only as a passing eddy or current. It is with the aid of the Cemincelmar that the Bessonodrim work their most potent magic as a green touch upon the land.

The rest of the story we must piece together for ourselves. We know Sauron wove terrible sorcery of drought and desiccation, poisoning the lands of the Entwives south of the Greenwood during the War of the Last Alliance. No mere incursion of warring bands could have made the land so desolate that the Entwives could not restore it. Being unable to heal their gardens, they chose exile in the East, where an untamed continent stretched before them unlike the troubled northwest of Endor.

The interaction of the Entwives with the Men of Rhovanion was deep enough, however, to become a permanent legacy. Today there are still priests of the Erthakuni (Uerdakyn), the Cult of the Earth, who remember the ancient tales about the Erthaithíns, the "Earth Mothers" who taught them the skills of tilling, sowing and reaping. The Folyavuldok, the Men of Dorwinion, tell similar stories about the "Earth Maidens" who blessed their land with fertility.

But the legends have been much altered over the course of time, so that the Entwives are remembered as goddesses with vast and wondrous powers, who still live hidden amongst the plants and rocks, in the soil and the waters; spirits who bring down the rain and clear the skies that the sun might shine.

The Valaquetta

In the Beginning of Days, Yavanna Kementári of the Aratar was charged with the ordering of things that grow upon the face of Arda. She it was that caused plants and trees to sprout and flourish and blos-

som when first the Two Lamps were lit and shone upon the soil. And when the dark came, so we are told, "Yavanna...was unwilling to forsake the Lands; for all things that grow are dear to her....Therefore...she would come at times and heal the hurts of Melkor (Sil.40-41)."

Later, when Yavanna learnt of Ilúvatar's plan that the *olvar*, the whole realm of plants, should be open to any abuse from his Children, she grieved for them and asked Manwë: "King of Arda….All my works are dear to me….Shall nothing that I have devised be free from the dominion of others?" To which Manwë answered: "When the Children awake, then the thought of Yavanna will awake also, and it will summon spirits from afar, and they will go among the *kelvar* and *olvar*, and some will dwell therein, and their just anger shall be feared (Sil.45, 46)."

Yavanna's protection of the plant world led her to establish a sanctuary where there would reside great powers for healing harm inflicted by evil upon her creations. (This concept is very similar to the Noldor in ICE's *Northern Waste* who try to redress the taint of the Northern region, although the Valaquetta is of another caliber of course.) Yavanna took tremendous pains to devise a way of concealing both the power and its source, so that it could be neither discovered nor afflicted by Melkor or any other who should take his side in the eternal struggle. Her solution was the creation of an herbaceous manifestation inspired by a refrain from the Ainulindalë.

To prevent more interference with her beloved plants here, Yavanna made a garden, setting that Word of Power into the ground as a matrix of living and growing things, both *kelvar* and *olvar*. This matrix is the Valaquetta Olvaron, a marvel to match any currently in northwest Middle-earth. Virtually indestructible and capable even of reproducing itself in smaller and modified versions if aided by a highly-skilled "user," this matrix preserved the spirit of Yavanna's purpose and her energy in order to ensure that Melkor and his minions could not taint the beauty she had envisaged and helped to fashion.

After Yavanna left Middle-earth for Aman together with the other Valar, her garden lay untouched and forgotten (except for her occasional visits throughout the First Age before the Awakening of the Children) until the early Third Age. In time, some of the Entwives who had withdrawn into the East discovered the Valaquetta and Yavanna's garden of wonderful beauty and power.

Fascinated by the matrix, and having devoted themselves to the study of it, these dedicated creatures grew even wiser in the ways of Yavanna, and began to call themselves the Sairolvar. Although with time their numbers dwindled, in much the same way as those of the Onodrim they had left behind, they each grew in stature. All remembered the terrible desolation and harsh taint of the soil that had driven them out of their homeland, and they yearned to return.

Powers of the Sairolvar

Like Ents, the Entwives vary greatly in appearance and many other aspects. Statistics for these creatures are therefore given in general terms only. They are huge creatures for purposes of critical strikes. Many are able to physically draw themselves up to a greater height (and reach) than at first perceived. (For more information about Ents and their specific powers see ICE's *Lords of Middle-earth Vol. III* p. 77-80.)

The Sairolvar have +25 to saves vs. Channeling and may use their PPs from that realm to affect plants, alter the weather and cast protection spells. A Sairolva is Extremely Hard (-50) to spot if there are any reasonable size plants in the area. They leave little or no trail and move very fast.

Most of the Sairolvar's greater powers come from their association with the Cemincelmar, lesser Maiar who exist partially in this world and partially in others invisible to mortals. They were forced to depart the Brown Lands because Sauron's sorcery caused any tarrying there to lose their *hröar* beyond their capacity for restoration. Now the Sairolvar feel that they can return and counteract the Dark Lord's evil essence with the Valaquetta Olvaron.

A Sairolva can use her song to call upon the Cemincelmar when she is in trouble. The Cemincelmar are practically invisible (residing in the earth and possessing *hröar* of the same element) and mostly undetectable unless some sort of magic is employed. A gentle humming will set the ground moving for 30' (9m) around her, or for 10' (3m) around a point up to 100 yards (90m) distant. These movements will be felt as an Unbalancing attack with an OB of up to 50. (Many DB components like shields do not apply against this attack.)

Alternatively, the Cemincelmar can "indwell" plants, enabling them to move and grab at opponents in their vicinity. Small creatures will be held fast, larger ones having their movement reduced by 25%, 50% or 75%. Huge creatures will be unaffected. These songs need at least 1 minute to take effect; the longer they continue, the greater the possible effect. Other forms of attack are possible, such as Tripping or Snaring.

However, the most fearsome combat effect of the Cemincelmar under the power of the Sairolvar is the Cuivë Cemo, the "awakening" or "churning" of the earth, in which the Cemincelmar suck all animal and plant life below the surface of the soil, burying them there while grounding and shredding them with stones, tiny animals and unyielding roots.

All stationary creatures seized by the Cuivë Cemo sink 12" (30cm)/round while in the affected area (up to the maximum depth of the soil). If a creature can move, it sinks 1" (2.5cm) less for each 10' (3m) of movement it has. Being attacked in this way is terrifying, and anyone witnessing it will also be afflicted with *Fear* (RR vs. 5th lvl). Death shortly follows burial, and even if rescued, those who have been submerged may have earth blocking their nostrils and mouth. Anyone surviving burial must make a 10th level RR, with a penalty equal to the amount of damage they took; those failing are afflicted with a mortal fear of bare earth, roots and so on. This phobia will stay with them for 3D6x10 years unless cured (needs *Mental Cures* spell).

The Wooden Whale

Eventually coming to understand something of the nature of the matrix that growing about them, some of the Sairolvar perceived that they might use its power to reverse the curse that Sauron had laid upon their gardens in the West. To bring this to pass, the Sairolvar devised a great wooden vessel to convey a duplication of the Valaquetta Olvaron together with themselves across Middle-earth to the site of their ancient gardens (now known as the Brown Lands). The Sairolvar call this enchanted, land-going vessel *Taurelinðaletúrataurinafantoráneatauremar*, which might roughly be interpreted as "Wood-singing-great-wooden-whale-wandering-wood-home;" or, in more hasty parlance, *Taurinafanto*.

Taurinafanto vaguely resembles a vast ship (like the Ark). It has no masts as such, although two posts support a massive canopy of some sort which entirely drapes the top of the vessel. When first sighted, it probably appears much closer than it really is, since it is built on such a huge scale. From prow to stern it measures 300 yards (275m) long, and from keel to the top of the canopy towers more

ENCHANTERS OF MIR

The Silent Shadow

Huinen and Arien

Chris Seeman: PO Box 1213, Novato, CA 94948, USA
(chrisl224@aol.com)

KWOOD

Lachglin

Mithril's "Mirkwood II - The Forest Depths" range (M103-M112) includes four figures relevant to the theme of this issue. The characters depicted here derive from ICE's 1983 Northern and Southern Mirkwood modules, and are creations of the authors of those modules. Much of the background information provided here is my own invention, filling the many gaps found in the MERP sources.

Huinen (Ml 05) is a Noldorin seer who passes a reclusive existence in a hidden fastness on the borders of the Necromancer's domain. Huinen is insane; or, like Hamlet, makes a pretense of being so. His motives, and the circumstances that brought him to so strange a sojourn, are mysterious, even to those few who even know of his existence. In his apparent distraction, the enigmatic Noldo calls himself by the ancient Quenya form of his name, "Water of Night," by which he was known to his own people in Valinor. When he came to Middle-earth to do battle for the Silmarils, the seer followed the custom of rendering his name into the Sindarin tongue. So he became known in Middle-earth as ***Fuinen.*** The strange tale of Fuinen's meeting with the Grey Elf Oropher is not known to the Elves of Mirkwood, but it is surmised that by some twist of fate their future king (then a subject of Thingol of Doriath) indebted Fuinen to himself, in payment of which the Noldo became his servant - a thing unheard of. Thus, Fuinen did not return into the West after the War of Wrath, but journeyed east with Oropher. Oropher became king of the Silvan Elves of Greenwood east of Anduin, and received from them his Silvan name. Some Wood Elves still remember the tall seer of Oropher, whom they named Mornen in their own tongue. It may have been during the early years of Oropher's rule, before he withdrew into the northern reaches of Greenwood, that Mornen established his secret dwelling of Ceber Fanui, the "Cloudy Tine." It has no Silvan name, for the Wood Elves have no knowledge of its existence. As the Tawarwaith moved ever northward in flight from the Shadow, the memory of Mornen, and even of Fuinen, faded. After Oropher's death in the War of the Last Alliance, both the names and the person they belonged to were forgotten. But Huinen remained, at the very heart of the Necromancer's domain, a thorn to trouble the mind of the Dark Lord.

Arien (Ml 06) is a seeress of the Wood Elves whom the Necromancer seduced to his allegiance. Now she serves as Huinen's assistant, but secretly spies on him on behalf of her true master. Arien's name is doubly unlikely because it is the Ouenya name for the Valië of the Sun. A more likely Silvan name for her would ***Anóril*** ("Sun-maiden").

Lachglin (M107) is a servant of the Necromancer of Dol Guldur. Lachglin's name ("Flame-glance") is more properly spelled ***Lachlin.*** By this name he was known in Arthedain, the land of his birth. A loremaster by training, Lachlin betrayed his homeland for sorcerous power. In time, Lachlin's treachery was uncovered and he was forced to flee to Angmar, where he rose high in the favor of the Witch-king until at last he was admitted to the secret Order of the Black Blood (an assassin-cult devoted to the Lord of the Dark) and sent to Dol Guldur to hear the will of his true master. There the Necromancer assigned him the task of spreading darkness into the Wood Elves' domain, and Lachlin took up his abode in the Mountains of Mirkwood, delving Sarn Gorwing, the "Stone of Vigorous Foam" at the source of the Enchanted River. As a sign of his confidence in Lachlin, the Dark Lord ordered the Witch-king to recover a wand of sorcery that Lachlin had once wielded in his native country, and by its power Lachlin summoned and bound to his will the Silent Shadow.

The Silent Shadow (Ml08) is Lachlin's demonic minion. Actually, Dindae (S. "Silent Shadow"), which in Silvan would be ***Dinðair,*** merely designates the type of demon this is; the one that serves Lachlin is Slyardach (a name of indeterminable origin).

than 125' (37.5m). These towers normally rise ca. 90' (27.5m) above the soil, 40' (12.5m) of which comprises the height of the canopy. The vessel has a beam of ca. 200' (60m).

Close up, Taurinafanto has a wrecked appearance, covered in living plants (many of which may be seaweed or vines) and encrusted with algae, mosses and lichens. The hull is dark grey and brown, built of an unidentifiable wood and/or possibly stone, while the canopy is sallow, tinged with green and brown stains.

The construction and method of propulsion of Taurinafanto are beyond the divination of mortals, perhaps even of the Elves. When the vessel moves it seems to glide through the earth, propelled by nothing more than the urge of the soil. Taurinafanto is quite slow. Normally it moves with a speed of ca. 1-3 mph (1.6-5 km/h). At this speed, the Cemincelmar must rest ca. 8 hours/day. In an emergency it may accelerate up to 10 mph (16 km/h) although this is very stressful for the Cemincelmar and cannot be kept up for more than ca. 8-10 hours, after which the Cemincelmar must rest 5x the duration for which this "flank speed" has been maintained.

When viewed from a distance, the vessel seems to merge with the land, rendering it relatively hard to spot. In fact, if one looks none too closely it may be mistaken for a small hill or other outcropping of the land. This effect is caused by the intense earth-magic in and around the ship. This holds especially true when the vessel stops and sinks into the ground until only the Upperdeck shows above the soil. This process takes about two hours. In this state is Absurd (-70) to spot in vegetation-rich environment, Very Hard (-20) otherwise.

The great furrow Taurinafanto drags closes over behind it, leaving only a wake of rapidly growing wild plants which flower the next day, creating a narrow swathe of blue and red across the green grasslands of Rhovanion. This wake disperses over the course of ca. 2 weeks. A successful Perception roll with -30 is necessary to spot the wake. Once found, it is relatively easy to follow: if the wake is present, a Tracking roll with +10 is necessary to follow it for one day with normal walking speed. For each speed increment above this, subtract 10 from the roll. The base bonus of +10 deteriorates 5/day after the vessel has passed. After 2 weeks the wake is not noticeable anymore.

Myriad beams of light spill down from concealed portals in the sides of the hull onto a rich bed of soil spread across the Belowdeck. Here thrives a complex community which, through its inner bonding and correspondence with the Valaquetta invoked by Yavanna, channels the power of the Song of Creation itself. There are tall shrubs and spreading bushes, grasses and creepers, lofty, slender reeds and palms, vibrant undergrowth and layer upon layer of leafy vegetation. Birds fly and sing amongst the plant life, small mammals push through the fallen leaves and chew on roots, insects dart from flower to flower and between the plants, isopods chew the organic debris and earthworms turn the soil.

As well as light, the matrix of plants needs water, and this is supplied by the canopy over the Upperdeck. An integral part of the Valaquetta is a prolific species of silkworm, and the Sairolvar collect the silk from these silkworms to maintain the canopy. Every dawn dew forms on the underside of the canopy and rivulets trickle and run down to vats and pools on the Belowdeck. In this way only purified and benign waters feed the Valaquetta Olvaron.

In contrast to this apparently chaotic jungle of plants and wildlife, dappled with golden beams and misty vapors, the Upperdeck is a more orderly place. The Sairolvar have their living space here (under the canopy), amid grassy and mossy lawns edged with delicate flowering plants. Only a shallow layer of soil covers this deck, but it has been "landscaped" with boulders and shrubs. An even light permeates the canopy, which is occasionally rolled right back. Round holes lead down to the Belowdeck, living ladders of woven ivy stretching over 50' (15m) into the greenery.

A community of some 28 Sairolvar, of widely differing types, dwell on the vessel. All have some knowledge of the Valaquetta and can use its power on the vessel or its vicinity. When they venture further abroad or while in the Brown Lands, however, they will be without the protection of the Cemincelmar until the Valaquetta has been transplanted and given time to work against Sauron's mortal curse.

The Sairolvar are careful to hide their presence on board from any prying eyes. They are especially watchful for evil agents; they know they cannot hope to escape the attention of the evil within Mirkwood, but realize that caution and discretion will make the success of their mission much more probable and buy them the necessary time.

Despite these precautions, careful observers will be able to see shadowy shapes moving behind the canopy with a successful -30 Perception roll. However, even winged spies close to the vessel's Upperdeck will see no more than this. Anyone coming close to the vessel will be discouraged; the Sairolvar will summon the Cemincelmar by singing and seek to disturb those present. First they simply cause the ground to shake and shudder, then seek to drive the intruders back. If this fails, two or three Sairolvar silently come through secret portals in the side of the vessel and cause the Cuivë Cemo.

The Voyage

Twenty years have passed since the Sairolvar began their long journey out of the East. Steadily they steered their strange vessel over the lands, ever avoiding Mannish settlements and travelling mostly by night, but stopping frequently to enjoy any special *olvar* they might encounter. (Just as the Ents themselves, Entwives are disinclined to being "hasty.") The journey was fairly uneventful until they reached the land of Dorwinion, "Folyavuld" as it is called by its inhabitants.

The Sairolvar chose this approach into Rhovanion - through Folyavuld by way of the grasslands to the north of the Inland Sea, rather than through the southern steppe corridor of Gathod, between the Sea and the Ash Mountains of Mordor - because during their eastward wanderings they had once passed through this fair land, and had taught to its people the tilling and sowing of the soil. Mindful of the reverence in which the Folyavuldok held them, the Sairolvar hoped they might get from them sorely needed tidings about the current state of the Brown Lands.

When they arrived near the Folyavulda citadel of Larisa Toron, the Sairolvar brought Taurinafanto to a halt. Taking counsel with one another, the Sairolvar decided to minimize their dealings with the Folyavuldok until they reached their

final destination. Lótesanga, one of their number, volunteered to make initial contact with the Gyogarasag, an order of Folyavulda herbalists and healers devoted to the memory of the "Earth Maidens" who taught their ancestors.

After some searching, Lótesanga found a man she deemed suitable for an encounter with one of the Earth Maidens. While returning to the Gyogarasag sanctuary of Larisa Toron, as he rested beside the banks of the Uldona river, this *gyogul*, Dasron, was approached by Lótesanga. At first he couldn't believe his eyes and fell to his face before her, but as he listened to the Sairolva's message, he was overcome with joy at the prospect of aiding her. He promised to approach the leaders of his sanctuary with her request for tidings, keeping the Sairolvar's presence secret. Lótesanga told Dasron to meet her again after seven days at the same location, and he obliged.

Immediately returning to Larisa Toron, the young *gyogul* asked for an emergency meeting of the Council of Elders. They were reluctant to accede, because Dasron refused to give any information about the reason for this unusual request, and because there were insufficient members present for a regular council meeting. Finally, after five days, all members were present and the meeting began.

Dasron told them of his meeting with Lótesanga. At first they didn't believe him, but when he brought forth one of the Sairolva's flowery tresses which she had given to him as proof, they were awed and overjoyed at the news. Dasron was appointed spokesman of the council since it was he who was originally contacted by the Earth Mistress and so seemed to be their chosen messenger.

The *gyogulak* eagerly gathered any news that might help the Sairolvar. After the appointed seven days, Dasron again met Lótesanga, disclosing to her what had been gleaned about the inhabitants of lands about. Lótesanga told Dasron that Taurinafanto had to leave the area soon, and he proposed to gather more specific details, following Taurinafanto when he was ready, so that he might act as an intermediary with the local peoples. Lótesanga agreed and designated a spot ca. 80 miles (130 km) eastward of the Brown Lands to meet with her again. Passing through Folyavuld, the Sairolvar now steered Taurinafanto in the direction of their ancient gardens.

Meanwhile, the Gyogarasag of Larisa Toron continued with their hectic activity of scrapping together all information that might be useful for the Earth Maidens. A week later, everything was prepared and Dasron was sent to follow the vessel. Unfortunately, servants of the Shadow had gotten word of the strange activity within the sanctuary. After the initial Council of Elders had taken place, two *gyogulak* were discussing the subject a bit too carelessly and one of the Necromancer's spies - a cook - overheard their talk.

At the time, the cook was able to guess only that something very important to the Gyogarasag was going on and that Dasron was the key figure. None the less, the spy dutifully reported these developments to Oraishapek the Dispossessed, the Necromancer's chief minion in Folyavuld. Because of the limited time available, the Dispossessed sent his most trusted and solely available servant, Râisha, to intercept and interrogate the *gyogul* concerning the undertaking.

GM Note: *Oraishapek (Din-Ohtar) is the main villain featured in "The Perfect Seed" adventure in* The Inland Sea *module. He plots to defile the spring and garden of the Earth Maidens which Larisa Toron guards, one of the main sources of Folyavuld's fertility. The Valaquetta Olvaron has the power to counteract Oraishapek's defilement, and thus (though he does not yet know it) the Sairolvar's presence in Rhovanion threatens his scheme.*

Dasron left the citadel and went straight for the Brown Lands. Four days after his departure, Râisha arrived at Larisa Toron and the chase began. After seven more days she overtook him and ambushed the lone traveler in the middle of the night. A short fight ensued, but Râisha was well prepared and soon overwhelmed Dasron.

Hours passed and Dasron stubbornly refused to betray information about his mission; Râisha grew impatient. She began to torture the *gyogul*, but even then he refused to give way. Finally, after two days of grueling torment, Râisha learned that Dasron was bound to meet some strange foreign "maidens" near the Brown Lands south of Mirkwood at a spot about which she was only able to gain imprecise details.

As this meeting seemed to be of great importance and time was pressing, Râisha decided to head directly for the site and take matters in her own hands, (rightly) guessing that she would have no time to inform any of her superiors. Immediately Râisha departed, killing the broken *gyogul* and taking all of his possessions she had use for.

The Sturgurnak

The coming of Râisha portends doom for Taurinafanto and the Sairolvar's quest, because she is the possessor of a deadly bane to all things living: the Sturgurnak. This mysterious, black stone was originally one of the bright gems Melkor stole from Formenos, which were later fed to Ungoliant. Most of these gems were consumed and forever lost. A few she belched forth, but they were changed. Instead of being the crystals of light they once were, they became dark and consuming.

These gems were later collected at great pains by Morgoth's minions because the Dark Lord wished to have them back, and perhaps find a purpose for them. One was given to one of his shadow-demons (See Chapter 11 of *The Silmarillion*) as a prize for some special service and for enhancing Morgoth's powers over darkness. This demon held it for the remainder of the First Age. At last, he was sent to combat the Host of Valinor in the War of Wrath along with Morgoth's other minions.

But the mission was of no avail. Morgoth's host was broken and the remnants fled back to Angband, the demon among them. When Morgoth released his host of winged dragons, the dark armies again were strengthened and indeed pushed back the western host for a while. But at last Ëarendil battled Ancalagon the Great Drake and, after a climactic battle, wounded him mortally so that the great beast fell from the sky.

It was at this place that the carrier of the gem was struck down by Ingwë, High King of all the Elves. The demon fell to the ground, and with him the dark gem. The battle washed over him and Ancalagon fell upon and broke the Three Spires of Thangorodrim. As the dragon lay there, his last fiery breath came forth and touched the dark gem.

Normally no item could have withstood this onslaught; but the skill of Fëanor, combined with Ungoliant's power and the fact that Ancalagon's fire was already diminished, led to a strange transformation. The light-consuming power of Ungoliant bound the fire of the dying dragon and held it within the crystal. Even then the drake's power was nearly too much, but the gem held together, though warped in appearance - no longer the clear and fine crystal, but pitted and scarred like a rough chunk of coal or volcanic rock.

Morgoth had lost the battle, but there were still great numbers of his leaderless servants abroad, most of whom were slaughtered by the Host of the West. A few (such as Skorg the Orc with Morgoth's Ulukai; see ICE's *Mount Gundabad* for details), however, managed to escape into the East. Among these was a band of Easter-

lings whose leader, because of an attraction to it which even he did not understand, took the black gem with him.

This chieftain fled into the wide East and ended his flight in Khand. Here he took over lordship through the skills learned in the service of Morgoth and so became the ancestor of the line of Ûvatha. Over the years and with long attunement, Ûvatha's descendants, including Râisha, learned how to release the fire stored within the gem without destroying it automatically. Even then the chance of collapse for the delicate balance of power is very great, and the Sturgurnak has never been used, until now…

THE SETTING

The adventure is dominated by the Gramiska settlements south and southeast of Mirkwood. Their thriving economy gives the region its stability. Politically they are loosely organized around the major settlement of Stainahring. This town is the place of meeting for the chieftains and elders. Additionally it harbors the most important holy place of the southern Grama.

The loose Gramiska "nation" provides much of the foodstuffs for the adjacent realms and peoples. Additionally its relative high population provides a numerous, well-trained and well-equipped levy for their Gondorian allies in case of a real emergency (such as a full-scale invasion). The Gondorian territories of Dor Rhúnen and Ithilien are the most important export markets for the agricultural products of the Grama, with which the Grama acquire high quality finished products from the Dúnedain. The Waldinga (Waildungs) of the East Bight are also important customers of Gramiska products, but the Ehwathrumi (Éothraim) as a whole only occasionally trade with the Grama, relying mostly on their own livestock breeding for sustenance.

This central role in the production of foodstuffs for a number of neighbors has made the Grama an important (and well-off) part of the economic and political relations in southern and southwestern Rhovanion. The shadow of Dol Guldur has left surprisingly little impact upon the hardy Northmen living so near the evil citadel. In general, they ignore it, but still fear the Necromancer as an evil entity who has power over the spirits of the deceased. They prefer not to mention him as long the evil stays in the forest.

The Erthakuni, the Northman cult of the earth, was established by the elders of certain tribes after the departure of the Entwives from their homelands. The cult explains the origins of agricultural techniques and the gifts of the earth. It is loosely organized and lacks a formal hierarchy. Precedence is only established by the venerability of a priest or priestess, and by their popular acclaim. Since both men and women work the fields, orchards and pastures, both devote themselves to the cult.

The religion is based on a series of annual festivals. At the end of winter there is the Ertharíns (Turning of the Soil), then in spring come the Sëathwa (Festival of Sowing) and the Blominassus (Celebration of the Blossom). In high Summer the Warmai Windos (Festival of Warm Winds) ushers in the change in the weather on the plains which ripens the crops and can sometimes bring drought. At the close of summer is the greatest of all celebrations, Asaniböains (Harvest Home), when great matters are settled, men and women are betrothed, and so on. Towards the end of autumn is Wintraus Wardíns (Winter Warding) and in midwinter is Yiulimel (Yuletide). The Wintraus Wardíns is a festival of bonfires and processions through the fields with flaming torches to keep the cold, dark spirits at bay. Yiulimel celebrates the winter solstice and the beginning of growing days.

Communities that observe the Erthakuni rely on the ritual blessings of crops and festivals through the year to support them. The Erthakuni centers upon the veneration of Akranagiba the Earth Mistress (whom the Dúnedain identify as an aspect of Yavanna Kementári). The Grama believe that Akranagiba is served by an unspecified number of Erthaithíns (their concept of the Entwives) who will look after - in a spiritual sense - the fields, hedgerows, homes and pasturelands of the worshippers. These spirits are revered with prayer (ritual chants at daybreak and eventide, i.e., before and after the day's work) and offerings of produce and other gifts.

Priests and priestesses believe they are able to channel power from the Song of Creation and (to a much lesser degree) from their own power. In certain places over the years this has instilled certain sites with a power of their own, resulting in holy springs, wells, stones, groves and even individual trees. Some of these places indeed might be inhabited by spirits (lesser Maiar) that are known to Men as dryads, feys etc. Most priests are settled and attached to one such "Erknastath;" others are itinerant and act as wandering preachers. Some specialize in activities such as healing (rare), helping crops and livestock, and there are a few soothsayers, sages, hermits and so on.

GM Note: *Erthakuni animists have access to spell lists specific to their practice, namely in the sphere of nature and agriculture. You may wish to invent new lists for them in addition to those from the MERP rulebook.*

The priests and priestesses of Akranagiba are recognizable by their yellow and green garb, typically long cloaks and undergarments, trimmed with flowers and leaves appropriate to the time of year, or (for the more established priests) jeweled imitations. They usually go bare-headed, winding plants into their hair, and even braiding and plaiting flowering creepers, like ground elder or goldbine, amongst their tresses. They wield quarterstaves and spears. They do not hunt, surviving instead mainly on donations of food, firewood and skins from cult members. Their strength is greatest when close to their chosen Erknastath.

GM Note: *According to the power level of your campaign, the exact nature of any special abilities associated with such places is up to you to decide.*

The Gondorian presence in the region centers primarily upon the town of Rhúnost. This settlement has ca. 8000 inhabitants and serves as Gondor's administrative and military center for the territory of Dor Rhúnen. At the same time it marks the eastern boundary of lands held by Gondor, while the road from Rhúnost to Tirith Anduin marks the northern limit of lands occupied by the Dúnedain (so Rhúnost lies at the northeastern edge of Gondorian settlement).

The towns of Othlebed and Tirith Thoron, lying further eastward, act only as frontier posts for the lands of the Ehwathrumi. They have Dúnadan garrisons, but all civilians are Northmen. No Gondorian settlers ever ventured eastward of the line Rhúnost-Eithil Gelebrin-Carchost/Narchost. The most sizable population of Gondorians is centered around Rhúnost and Eithil Gelebrin just north of the Dead Marshes.

Gondor profits much from the friendly and steadfast Grama. The military presence of Gondor, abetted by its Ehwathrumiska (Éothraim) allies, is supported by the stable political and economic situation making the territory of Dor Rhúnen a secure border of the South-kingdom. The Ehwathrumiska lands east of it serve as the perfect buffer for any aggression out of the East.

GM Note: *More information about the Gondorian presence in Dor Rhúnen can be found in ICE's* Mirkwood *and* Dagorlad and the Dead Marshes *supplements (although the*

info found here has to be adjusted; cf. OH 1.23-26 for the problems with ICE's interpretation of this region).

The Ehwathrumi play a relatively minor role in the region of this adventure since they posses no settlements here. Their lands lie east and northeast of the adventure's region, and only occasionally a band of them grazes their horses in Gramiska territory. Such occurrences are usually accompanied by some raiding and livestock thievery as is common among nomads. (See ICE's *Riders of Rohan* for details on their customs.) The Horse-lords are more frequently encountered as mercenary cavalry in the pay of the Dúnedain.

The Asdriags are a rare sight in this part of Rhovanion. These nomadic people are more often encountered in southern Ehwathrumavuld where they have a number of semi-permanent camps. From here they venture out to fight or make some cattle or horse-thievery upon the other inhabitants, preferably the Ehwathrumi. Asdriag presence in the adventure is unlikely because of Gondor's strong position here but a band of raiders might have success in going this far undetected. Use or discard these Easterlings in the scenario as you see fit.

The whole political and economic situation changes radically after the Great Plague has passed the region. The Gramiska lands are utterly shaken. Nearly their whole population claimed by the evil sickness; the rest flee in terror. The Dúnedain of the area as well as the Ehwathrumi suffer also. Gondor's position is seriously weakened by the loss of its own population and the missing Gramiska support. The province of Dor Rhúnen begins a rapid decline which shows immediately after the worst effects of the pestilence have passed: the fortresses of Carchost and Narchost are abandoned.

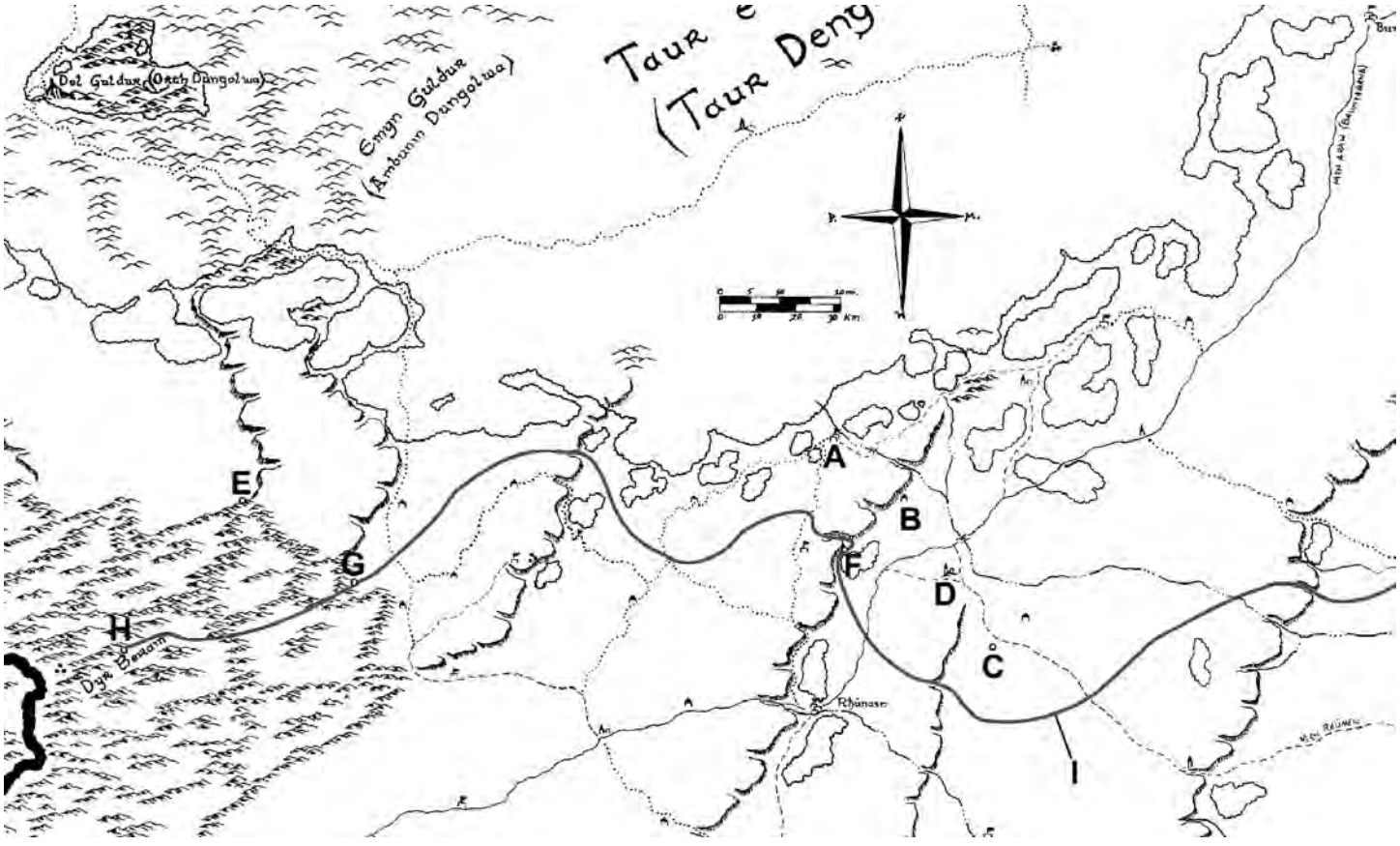
The culmination of this development is the total loss of power and influence in Rhovanion during the Wainrider Wars (TA 1851-1899). Gondor is very pleased when the Ehwathrumiska Anthara (Anthars) tribe moves into the region (the settlement area described in ICE's *Riders of Rohan*), compensating for some of the losses suffered in the Plague. Though the relatively few Ehwathrumiska herders are not nearly so strong as the settled and more populous Grama. In spite of the partial recovery, the old structure of the firm Dúnadan-Northman alliance south of Mirkwood is broken forever, making it easy for the Dark Lord to reclaim access to Mordor which was blocked before by the alliance.

MAPS

All map elevations are given in feet. Dark grey areas represent woods.

Regional Map

A. Stainahring.
B. Wothiwatins Brunna and Brunninsburg.
C. Site of Râisha's ambush of Dasron.
D. Gondorian castle of Ambarad.
E. Cave complex at the edge of the Brown Lands. This site serves as a base for troops from Dol Guldur. Gwilithaur's reinforcements are located here.
F. First resting place of Taurinafanto in Dor Rhúnen. From here the Sairolvar make initial contacts in the region.
G. Second resting place of Taurinafanto. Here it awaits the result of the Erthakuni meeting.
H. Place of Planting. Here the Valaquetta shall be placed.
I. The path of Taurinafanto on its way through southern and southwestern Rhovanion.



Stainahring

This is the place where the Erthakuni meet with Lótesanga to agree upon a site for the Valaquetta. Because of its size, and the wealth and power of its inhabitants, Stainahring might be regarded as something of a "capital," though in fact its chief-

tain wields no real political power over the surrounding Gramiska communities. The importance of the town stems from the nearby Erknastath of the same name. The authority of its Erthakuni priest and the reverence for the Erknastath make the inhabitants of this town the "first among equals." This means their word has much weight in meetings and their advice is often complied with.

The town itself numbers ca. 1300 inhabitants whose houses are clustered together. The old upper town is encircled by a wooden fence upon an earthen wall and serves as a refuge for the whole population in case of attack. The inhabitants' fields are grouped around the town. Stainahring has the normal mix of craftsmen needed in such a community. (Place them wherever you like in the town map.)

The town is only lightly fortified. Its outer perimeter is marked by a wooden fence which is primarily intended to keep wild animals out. Only the old and new upper towns have better defenses. The presence of the Gondorians in the region and the number of Gramiska warriors lessens the necessity for sophisticated fortifications. In case of a serious attack the outer wall is likely to fall soon.

The town is structured like so many other Northman sites. There are no paved roads, only wooden embankments at best. There are large gaps of open space between the buildings, occupied by orchards, pastures etc. for the livestock and husbandry of these rural Northmen, as is the perimeter of the town. During this adventure the fields stand ripe and full, offering good cover for enemies to make a covert approach.

The Erknastath of Stainahring is maintained by three Erthakuni priests who live near the structure and oversee all operations that take place here. The site is the most important Erthakuni holy place for a hundred miles in any direction. It is composed of a ring of standing stones connected by horizontal stones on top with a diameter of ca. 150' (45m). Within this henge stand three solitary stones symbolizing the Erthakuni elements earth, water and air. The stones measure 10' high x 6' wide x 3' deep (3 x 1.8 x 0.9m).

1. **The Thign's Hall.** Located in the new upper town, Thridyawulf's longhouses are separated from the rest of the new upper town by an extra wooden fence (1a).
2. **Gaquumthistain.** This is the ancient place where the most important matters (excluding religious ones, which are decided at the Erknastath) of the Hrothimannans clan are discussed and decided.
3. **Palisade.** This is a simple wooden palisade atop an earthen rampart. While effective against wild animals and raids, it is of little use against a determined attack by a larger force.
4. **New Upper Town.** Its wall is built from wood atop a stone base.
5. **Old Upper Town.** Its wall is built from wood atop an earthen base.
6. **The Erknastath.**
7. **Longhouses.** Used by three priests and their acolytes, as well as attendants.
8. **The Great Meadow.** Here are held fairs, great meetings with other clans, military musters etc.
9. **Streets.** Some of the more important ways are paved with wooden planks while the most are no more than dirt that become quite muddy after a serious rain.
10. **Road to Rhúnost.**

GM Note: *The 0' contour on the town map lies 300' (90m) above sea level.*

Brunninsburg and Wothiwatins Brunna

This village is located ca. 40 miles (65km) NE of Rhúnost. It is a typical Gramiska village as described in ICE's *Mirkwood* supplement. It is peculiar for the Erknastath of Wothiwatins Brunna located nearby (too small to be depicted on the regional map). The village has ca. 160 inhabitants and is mostly self-sufficient except for finished goods which are mostly bought at Stainahring or Rhúnost.

A bit apart from the village proper is the holy spring Wothiwatins Brunna with the cottage of its priest, Kaldahilmya. The water from the spring is high in mineral content and slightly effervescent. Use this site as it fits your campaign. Normally the PCs should visit this site if they seek information or healing. Perhaps they might wish to escort Kaldahilmya to the meeting.

The town has been in quite an uproar since Kaldahilmya announced that some very important event concerning the region and the Erthaithíns will happen very soon. He has not told any more and the people are anxious about what will come.

1. **Brunninsburg.** Its wall is built from wood atop an earthen base.
2. **Local Paths.** They are no more than dirt ways that become quite muddy after heavy downpour.
3. **Kaldahilmya's Cottage.**
4. **Wothiwatins Brunna.**

The Place of Planting

This is the place where the Valaquetta Olvaron should be planted into the Brown Lands. Use the map to stage your own version of the final battle. Taurinafanto is located in a shallow valley between some hills. The 'A' marks the side of the vessel to be dismantled.

The Cave Complex

This cave complex is marked with an 'E' on the GM's regional map. It serves as kind of base for Dol Guldur's troops when they operate in southern Rhovanion. It is far away from either Dol Guldur and the nearest Gramiska settlements so not draw undue attention. It is well supplied with all kinds of goods needed for soldiers and is able to house up to 300 warriors for a short time. It is also the last stop for the Necromancer's minions when leaving the evil citadel in direction south.

THE ADVENTURE

This is a free-style adventure. There is no typical patron who pays the PCs, nor does it follow a straight course of action. Important places and NPCs are described and key events take place, but it is up to the PCs to react to them and influence the course of future events. The PCs can either help the Sairolvar (if aligned with the Free Peoples) or the minions of Sauron (if serving the Dark Lord). The adventure description is designed for a plot helping the Entwives.

The following section presents guidelines for suggested activities at each stage, but you are at liberty to adapt these as you see fit to suit the style of adventure you and your players prefer. The only plot element that should take place regardless of events is the end where the vessel and the Entwives are destroyed - unless you allow the "official" timeline to be changed.

Owing to its freeform nature, you are advised to be very familiar with the plot, NPCs and places before running this adventure. Especially the three independently from one another operating enemy factions (Thiudarík, Râisha and Gwilithaur) should make interesting situations until the players realize the nature of their adversaries. They should be used intelligently to confuse the PCs and throw them off balance.

If a GM wants to run this adventure as a prelude to "The Perfect Seed," a small portion of the Valaquetta Olvaron should be spared from destruction in order to remedy the plight brought upon the holy Folyavulda citadel by the Dispossessed. In this case the servant of Sauron might succeed in planting the cursed stone, but after removing it, the well in the Folyavulda citadel is still tainted and could be blessed again with the help of the Valaquetta fragment.

Timeline

This timeline is intended to help the GM better keep track of the actions of the PCs and NPCs over the course of the adventure. The PCs may be introduced at any time after the 15 Nórui. An early date is favorable to give the PCs plenty of time to draw reinforcements from places even a bit distant (such as mercenaries from Unsibyaburg).

17 Lothron Taurinafanto nears Larisa Toron.

21 Lothron Lótesanga contacts Dasron.

26 Lothron Meeting of Larisa Toron's Gyogarasag council.

28 Lothron Dasron meets Lótesanga again, conveying to her what information he has. He promises to follow the vessel and act as an intermediary. Taurinafanto leaves Folyavuld.

4 Nórui Dasron sets out to follow the Sairolvar.

8 Nórui Râisha arrives at Larisa Toron and follows Dasron.

12 Nórui Thiudarík spots Taurinafanto for the first time.

15 Nórui Râisha ambushes Dasron and captures him.

17 Nórui Râisha squeezes the information she can get from Dasron and kills him.

18 Nórui Taurinafanto arrives north of Rhúnost.

21 Nórui Thiudarík receives new orders concerning the vessel from Haed.

23 Nórui The Sairolvar fear that Dasron won't come anymore and venture out of their own.

26 Nórui Lótesanga meets Kaldahilmya, he agrees to call a meeting of the Erthakuni priests within reach. Taurinafanto leaves for the edge of the Brown Lands. Sauron perceives the subtle magic of the Sairolvar and sends Gwilithaur from Dol Guldur to investigate the matter.

30 Nórui The meeting of the Erthakuni priests at Stainahring begins. Taurinafanto reaches the edge of the Brown Lands.

3 Cerveth The meeting ends. It is decided to plant the Valaquetta in the middle of the Brown Lands.

3-5 Cerveth Lótesanga teaches the necessary rituals to the Erthakuni. Through Gwilithaur, Sauron learns the identity of the vessel and its inhabitants (though the Valaquetta is still unknown to him). Gwilithaur is sent to deal with the matter. Troops are assigned that may support her at request.

6 Cerveth Led by Lótesanga, the Grama head for the resting place of Taurinafanto. They pick up more people from the villages they pass by.

12 Cerveth The procession reaches Taurinafanto at the edge of the Brown Lands.

16 Cerveth The procession reaches the planting site.

17 Cerveth The Valaquetta is destroyed together with the Sairolvar before the planting is completed.

Starting the PCs

Prior to the coming of Taurinafanto to Rhovanion, sensitive PCs (In/Em bonus 20 or greater) have visions of something very strange happening in their vicinity, starting as a gut feeling and growing stronger and more frequent over ca. 3 days. Later even less sensitive PCs share these feelings, culminating in a dream shared by all that some great tragedy and misfortune will befall in the near future. No tangible details are given, but the feeling of need and urgency is very strong. (These visions and dreams are caused by the unquiet spirit of Dasron.)

In the event that Taurinafanto arrives "before" the adventure proper starts, the PCs may hear of it through gossip in a village or town they are resting in, or from some NPCs they encounter during or after their last adventure. Such a wonder will surely be a conversation piece for miles round. Alternatively, you may have the adventure start with the PCs themselves witnessing the arrival of the vessel late one afternoon. In any case the PCs should be present in the area from previous adventures.

Both types of PCs (supporting or opposing the Shadow) may be used, but the GM should adjust the adventure to fit his or her campaign. Evil PCs are more likely to help the agents of the Dark Lord, while those allied with the Free People will try to help the Sairolvar. It is suggested to use PCs that are aligned versus the Shadow.

Hopefully this will be enough to stir the PCs into action (being people who actively fight for the cause of good) so that they venture forth and start to investigate what's going on (otherwise beat them for their ignorance and make the next adventure quite deadly...).

Taurinafanto settles ca. 25 miles N-NE of Rhúnost on the Talath Harroch, tucked between a small forest and a cliff ('F' on the regional map). This is the site agreed upon with Dasron, and here the Sairolvar wait for him. Settlements in the area (but not close by - the Sairolvar have deliberately kept out of the way of Mannish habitation) include Gondorian settlements (Rhúnost and Ambarad), Ehwathrumiska camp sites and outlying Gramiska villages and farms.

Initial Reactions

A good point for the PCs to start from might be the Gondorian town of Rhúnost. PCs in the area may pick up tales concerning the vessel. (See p. 34 below.) Select these randomly or choose them to suit appropriate actions of the PCs. This is a good time for the PCs to search for the vessel and validate the rumors heard. Perhaps they will investigate the vessel, seek advice elsewhere, make plans and so on. Hopefully, they will end up very confused and none the wiser, unless they have been exceedingly clever or lucky.

After the vessel has arrived at the spot arranged with Dasron (the wood west of Ambarad) Taurinafanto lays quiet for some days, sinking into the ground. During this time, some of the Sairolvar leave the vessel secretly to seek out the leaders of the Erthakuni in the vicinity. They are worried about the disappearance of the *gyogul* and decide to take matters in their own hands because time is pressing.

The Sairolvar seek to enlist the aid of loyal local Free Peoples in their quest to revive the Brown Lands from Sauron's curse. After they have established communication, the vessel leaves the site. It is already causing too much attention in this relative densely populated region, especially Gondorian patrols are patrolling the region more closely because of the strange destruction of the road to Unsibyaburg where Taurinafanto crossed it.

This mystery causes much discomfort to the Dúnadan commander of the region. The Sairolvar leave Lótesanga as a spokesperson behind and fix a meeting place near the edge of the Brown Lands ('G' on the regional map). This location is the limit for easy travel with the Cemincelmar; to push them further might harm them.

By this time the Necromancer has learned something of the nature of the vessel but is unable to give it more attention because of his preoccupation with the impending Plague. He also wants to keep a low profile so as not to draw undue attention before his great stroke. Since he has no idea where to look for Taurinafanto, he sends only one (relatively) low level ser-

vant.

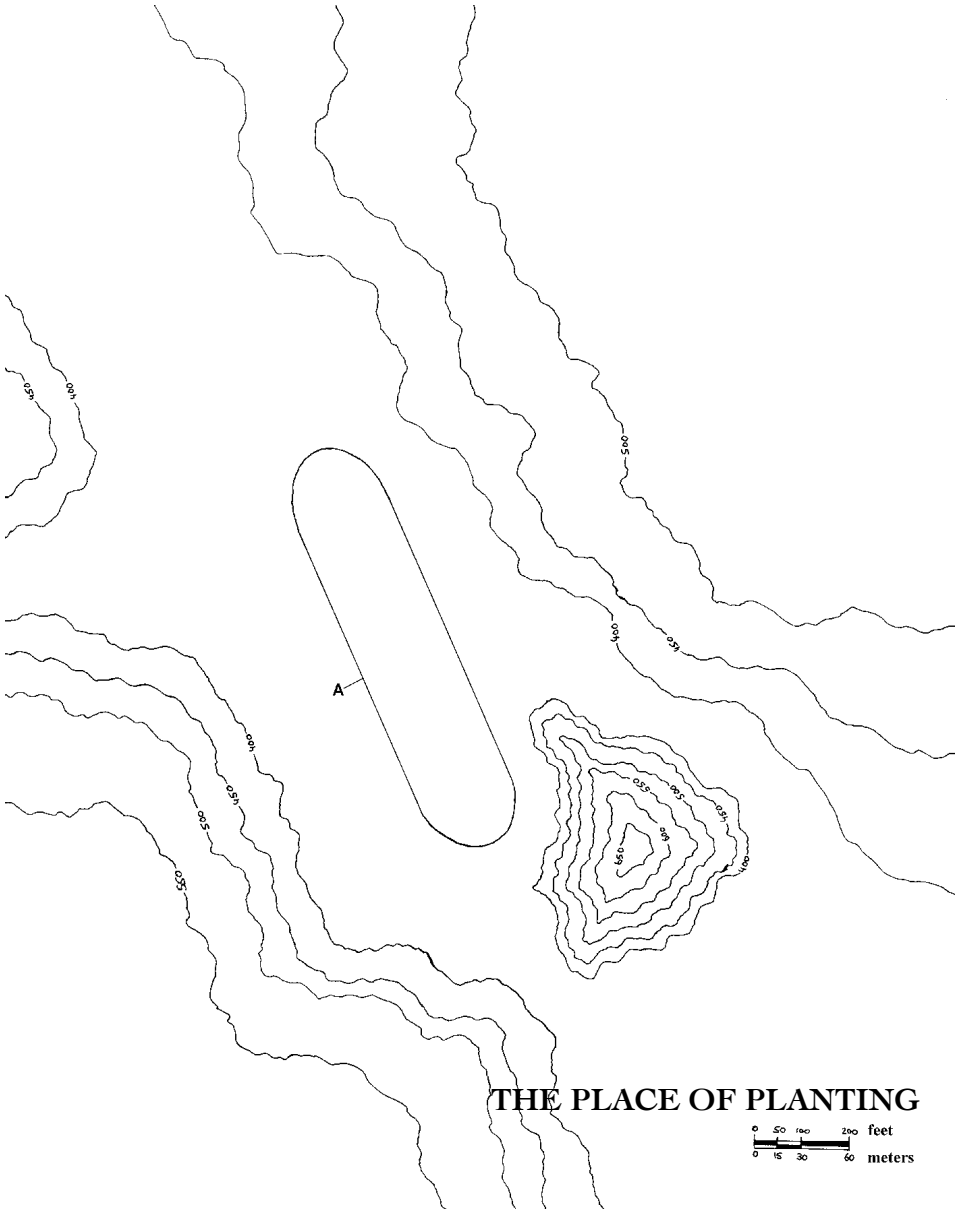
From its departure until its arrival east of the Brown Lands, Taurinafanto draws the greatest amount of attention because of the densely populated character of the region. Although their plan is nearing completion, the proximity of Dol Guldur leads the Sairolvar to the conclusion that stealth is no longer possible. Indeed, they are "roused" by the circumstances (similar to the Ents invading Isengard).

Thiudarík has spotted the vessel two weeks before and guesses (rightly) it's something opposed to his masters. He met Haed of the Cult of the Long Night (See ICE's *Mirkwood*.) eight days later and has been given new orders. If the PCs are being noticeably interested in it, he is instructed to try to recruit them.

At the end of this period a council of the Erthakuni priests is held at the holy site of Stainahring near the village of Stainahring. A hundred and three priests are attending this meeting, and although not secret, it is strictly guarded by Gramiska warriors and very hard to infiltrate. The PCs must have a very good explanation and be very convincing to gain access to this meeting. At the council, Lótesanga addresses the priests and seeks their aid in planting the Valaquetta.

Although tremendously excited by the Erthaithí and her scheme, the priests start bickering about where the Valaquetta should be planted. Many desire it for the benefit of their own regions, and no easy compromise can be found. The debate goes on for three days and ends with perhaps half of the priests walking out. The rest agree to assist in the transferal of the Valaquetta to a spot at the center of the Brown Lands.

This meeting is a very good opportunity for good role playing and diplomacy on behalf of the PCs when they (hopefully) try to argue for the greater good of all (speaking at the council, trying convert individual priests to their cause during pauses etc.) Just imagine your PC as a lobbyist trying to win over politicians before an important decision. It is suggested to give the Stainahring some powers of protection or bonuses for the priests to prevent the PCs from solving their problems by force.



The Procession

Lótesanga instructs the Erthakuni priests in the ceremonies needed to help bless the Valaquetta, and a procession ritual to lead the vessel to the designated site within the Brown lands without hurting the Cemincelmar. This procession encompasses 48 priests plus a Gramiska retinue of ca. 320 people (of whom 100 are warriors).

The procession is necessary to alleviate the effects of Sauron's curse on the Cemincelmar, which might otherwise be corrupted or destroyed. The procession will need protection (hence the warriors) and might be attacked by either a body of low level evil troops (Orcs, Trolls, Easterlings) or one of the Necromancer's minions (with a band of troops, of course). Alternatively, Thiudarík might persuade the PCs to attack the Erthakuni. Pick the type of attack that is mostly appropriate to the situation.

Transplanting the Valaquetta

Eventually, despite harassment, Taurinafanto reaches the site. There it settles right down into the earth, so that its Belowdeck is level with the ground outside. The Sairolvar then enlist the aid of the Erthakuni. One side of the vessel is dismantled by the Sairolvar (and whomever is willing to help) and, with the Sairolvar keeping up a continual chanting song, the Erthakuni protect the vessel and the ground around it while the Cemincelmar first churn the soil and then move the Valaquetta matrix in situ from the vessel to the prepared ground. This takes ca. 24 hours, and presents the best opportunity for an attack by evil forces (or the PCs, if they are still being duped by Thiudarík).

Once aware of what's going on, Sauron will not have sufficient time to prepare a full-scale assault on the site, and so is constrained by what agents and troops are immediately available. The fight is more balanced this time because the Cemincelmar are not able to cause the Cuivë Cemo as in normal land. The ceremony enabled them to move inside the Brown Lands and trans-

plant the Valaquetta Olvaron without taking too much damage, but the stress of the Cuivë Cemo is beyond their capabilities here.

***I Iláveметta* - The End of it All**

In the end, all the Sairolvar's work and effort is doomed to yield but little result, thanks to the fathomless depths of Sauron's iniquity. The Dark Lord's last agent (this should be Râisha, just because she is the rightful owner of the Sturgurnak) suddenly arrives on the scene (perhaps at the climax of the battle), or reveals him/herself, producing the Sturgurnak. After a brief soliloquy in typical arch-villain style, she speaks the words of command and the power of the Sturgurnak blasts the Valaquetta.

There is nothing that the PCs can do except save themselves (and even then this should result in a series of very severe injuries). The Sairolvar will seek to save the Valaquetta by cushioning the blast with their own life-force. This results in their inevitable demise, but saves a portion of the Valaquetta and/or the PCs. Whatever power remains to the Valaquetta is insufficient to counteract the inimical effects of the curse laid by Sauron aeons earlier - it fades and is forgotten over the tale of years; Taurinafanto crumbles into nothingness, the secret of its construction gone.

The perpetrator should escape the conflagration to be pursued by the PCs. This is a good hook to "The Perfect Seed" adventure - especially if the destroyer of the Valaquetta is Râisha, since she will make for Mistrand on the Inland Sea. Two fragments of the Valaquetta should survive: one to redress Oraishapek's impending defilement of Larisa Toron, the other to heal the Brown Lands in the far future (perhaps in the Fourth Age). The PCs need not realize that a portion of the Valaquetta survived. (This could be learned in a future adventure.) This presents an insurance for the GM in case the PCs should fail in their mission to stop Oraishapek.

GM Note: *If the PCs are extremely clever and/or lucky they might be able to protect the Valaquetta from destruction. In this case it is suggested that its power is not sufficient to counter Sauron's sorcery (because the Dark Lord is active again and resides in the vicinity of the Brown Lands). On the other hand, if you allow a change of history then the revival of the Brown Lands will be a major event indeed...*

Aftermath

After the destruction of Taurinafanto and the Sairolvar, Sauron learns the whole story about the ship - its inhabitants and intentions as well as the actions of the PCs and the Grama. He is particularly furious about the latter and makes sure that these brave men are "punished" for their arrogance of attempting to thwart his plans. Accordingly, the Gramiska farmers are especially hard hit by the Plague, and their special culture, based upon the Entwives' teachings, passes into oblivion. The few survivors flee to northern Rhovanion, keeping the memory of the Erthaithíns alive through traditions which will reemerge in the Fourth Age. The Erthakuni survives in northern Rhovanion, but its southern branch with its special ties to the Entwives is extinguished. The once thriving region south of Mirkwood is left utterly shaken and devastated after the Plague.

RUMORS

The encounters are presented as the basis for a tale to be related to the PCs by someone (this might be second, third or even fourth-hand, of course), with additional and more accurate information available to adventurers at the scene. Any of these "random events" may be used at any point of the plot. They can also be used to introduce Thiudarík to the PCs. He might hear one of the rumors at the same time as the PCs, or he may be the one who tells it to them. He will always seek to put the blackest interpretation on any event, and exhibits great concern for the welfare of the surrounding peoples, trying to enlist the sympathy and active support of the PCs.

Singing

Faint singing is heard emanating from the unearthly vessel, gentle and rhythmical yet somehow weird and mysterious. Different interpretations could be put on the music, since no words can be distinguished. At times, the repetitive sounds could even be said to be sinister - perhaps they form part of some unknown ritual ...

If the PCs are present: Closer to, the singing resembles more the sounds of nature in the open air; it lies somewhere between birdsong, the humming of busy insects and the rustle of leaves in trees on a windy day. If anyone listening knows Quenya to rank 4 ("rank 9 spoken" in RM) or better, they might "imagine" that the sound is of a strange choir, singing in some exotic dialect vaguely resembling some ancient Quenya from years past; however no sense may be made of it.

The Wake

Small springs have started welling in the path of the vessel and in the area where it now rests. Plants are flourishing there - some might say quite unnaturally. However, this strange wake demonstrates quite plainly that the vessel came out of the East.

If the PCs are present: Closer investigation of the plants and springs shows that the water is very pure but both poisonous plants and herbs are growing amongst the more usual plants of the region; for example: bright blue eyes, splayfoot goodwort, *muilfana* and *silmána*. (See ICE's *Mirkwood* p. 53 and *MERP* p. 85 and ICE's *Hands of the Healer*.)

GM Note: *Since it causes the temporary growth of plants not native to the region the Wake is an excellent opportunity to provide the PCs with any herbs they need. Feel free to alter the list presented above to meet your campaign's requirements.*

Evil Corpses

The bodies of half a dozen Orcs and a Troll are found close to the vessel. The bodies are severely mutilated, even to the extent of being "shredded." Their weapons are splintered and broken, their armor torn and useless. There are no signs of the evil ones' opponents. Some may interpret this as a sign that the vessel is the home of good creatures who have defended themselves successfully; others might say that the Orcs came from the vessel and, having been severely punished, their bodies were thrown from it.

If the PCs are present: A very Hard (-30) Tracking roll will reveal that the Orcs came from the south, went right up to the vessel, and then were leaving north before being set upon and killed. Five successful Tracking rolls are necessary to trail the Orcs back to a path leading to the Dead Marshes. There are no signs of opponents, even with Absolute Success on the roll. All the corpses are perhaps slightly dirtier than usual (even for Orcs and Trolls). This is because they were killed in a Cuivë Cemo. The party was on a scouting mission from Thuringwethost (See ICE's *Dagorlad and the Dead Marshes*.) that were killed before fleeing north to their overlord.

Odd Couple

Two corpses are found close to the nearest human habitation. Ambarad, the Gondorian castle ca. 16 miles (25km) SE of Brunninsburg or the town 8 miles (15km) straight west of Taurinafanto's resting place might be suitable if Taurinafanto is still in the region. The corpses are apparently

dumped there. One is a middle-aged man, the other a younger woman. Both are moderately well dressed, although the clothes are ruined. Both died from crushing blows or perhaps a bad fall. Neither is known to anyone hereabouts.

If the PCs are present: The PCs cannot identify them either. Careful examination of their possessions may suggest that they were thieves (e.g. possessing lock-pick-kits, masks, dark spare clothing etc.).

GM Note: *These are indeed a pair of thieves from Unsibyaburg (Strayhold - see ICE's* Brigands of Mirkwood.*) who investigated the vessel too closely and were slain after attacking the Sairolvar venturing out. Don't make it too easy to identify the profession of this pair!*

Flying Tonight

A giant creature is seen in the vicinity of the vessel, flying across the face of the moon. It is vaguely bat-like, being black with membranous flapping wings. Any of the following attributes may be given to it by the tale-teller:

- it was mounted by a rider clad in swathes of black;
- it was a fearsome beast but without a rider;
- it had glowing red eyes;
- it had a halo of guttering flame;
- it bore a man clad in white wielding a sword of gold;
- it was really a black eagle with the sign of an Eye on the underside of its wings;
- whatever else you can think of and what's reasonable to the situation.

If the PCs are present: Successful Perception rolls may give additional information as appropriate for either Râisha or Gwilithaur; note that if you repeat this encounter (perhaps once as a story and another time as a witnessed event), you should confuse the PCs by using the other minions of the Necromancer the second time. Any Perception roll will be at a significant penalty due to the darkness and distance involved.

Crazed Priest

One of the Erthakuni priests performs a blood sacrifice near the vessel, to honor the Erthaithíns' return. Some telling this story will go on to say how the sky turned black and thunder rolled in from the hills as if they were in agony; others might also maliciously add that the priest was aided by an invisible creature from the vessel (though how this was divined is not revealed).

If the PCs are present: The priest is gripped in a violent passion, and sacrifices a pair of goats on a makeshift altar. He is obviously mad if approached. After his ritual, he faints but there is little effect; that night, however, there is a terrific thunderstorm. Magical divination or weather-reading skills will determine that the storm is natural. It will not be possible for the PCs to reach the priest before he completes the ritual. The priest is scruffily dressed and one of the itinerant Erthakuni priests occasionally met.

Shadows at Night

One night, the side of the vessel opens and "something" comes out. A number of shadowy forms are seen; these are of indeterminate height, sire and even shape. Some will maintain that they are wights or wraiths or some other malefic undead creature come to poison the land and slay their children; others think they must be ancient spirits lost on a voyage through the Worlds.

If the PCs are present: Even the best Perception roll yields no more information. The forms glide over the earth and, since the night is so dark, they soon disappear from view. They do leave tracks which can be seen in the morning, but half a mile from the vessel they diverge and can no longer be followed. The tracks are unlike anything anyone in the party has seen before.

Alternative Rumors

If you wish to have alternative explanations for the provenance of the vessel, local sources may offer any of the following (all false of course). Remember though that there is a variety of local sources: the Gondorians, Grama, Waldinga of the East Bight and the Ehwathrumi, and each culture has its own peculiarities, legends and lore. Feel free to invent or add new explanations for the specific cultures. The following are only suggestions that might give a image of what is possible. These rumors stress the superstitious nature of men that stems from bits of old lore that is embellished by the imagination of later generations without the older knowledge.

- **Gondorian source:** The vessel is a Ship of the Dead. Part of Ar-Pharazôn's "Golden Fleet" sent to invade Valinor at the end of the Second Age, the ship was doomed rather than sunk in the cataclysm that swallowed Númenor. Since that dreadful day, the ship has sailed the seas and lands of the world, manned by an uncaring and undead crew, cursed to wander eternally that men should never forget the folly of the King.
- **Any non-Elven source:** The vessel is a ship of elven design, manufactured from magical wood that can fly or float or traverse the land. It has come from beyond Rhúnen, passing undetected through uninhabited wastes on a secret mission to challenge the Necromancer in Dol Guldur. The ship has weapons of great strength to blast the fortress to rubble and destroy the evil lurking therein.
- **Any source:** The vessel is a Pirate reaver gripped by a cyclone and whirled through the atmosphere high above the face of the Earth until it came crashing down here, dismasted and beached miles from me sea. It has been possessed by Orcs or some other race of evil creatures who are planning to launch an attack from it at the behest of their foul Master.
- **Any source (preferably Northman or Gondorian):** The vessel is the creation of Easterlings, home to hundreds of a new tribe of sorcerers from the Far East, out to dominate the region and claim it for their own. These barbaric worshippers of Evil have perverted the trees and rocks and all other aspects of Nature, bending them to their will and purpose to create this Ark to carry them so many leagues. Soon a hellish horde will burst forth in a black tide and sweep all before them.

Other Encounters

You may wish to instigate other encounters which will cause problems for the PCs; see Tables 23.1-23.3 in *Mirkwood* for a full listing of stats from human and wild beast encounters. Use the Encounter Table in MERP to determine the type of encounter(s). Remember that the arrival of Taurinafanto in the targeted region (where the Sairolvar are not trying to overtly hide it anymore) is a rather frightening occurrence, and many people will have fled the area in mortal fear. This means that a low level party has a good chance of getting involved without having to worry overmuch about dangerous Wilderland encounters.

NPCs

Austragild

Austragild is a rather eccentric priest. He is an aged (67), itinerant Erthakuni animist given overmuch to preaching and berating the Gramiska villagers he comes across. At times, his religious fervor gets the better of him and he goes rather mad. You can have the PCs encounter Austragild as the teller of one of the rumors, or as the crazed priest. (See p. 35 above.)

He has a special resistance ability giving him +10 RR vs. Essence magic, and possesses two magic items: a belt of woven leather thongs, dyed green and stitched with garnets, which gives +5 bonus to Base Spells and Directed Spells, and adds 5 PP to the wearer's total; and a gold ring carved with the symbol of a hammer which can cast a *Spell of Stunning* (duration 1 round/5% RR failure) 2x/day.

Austragild is intended to be a nuisance to the PCs, a source of misinformation and annoyance. He is loud and uncooperative at all times, and argues with them, chiding them if they are non-believers and render little help. He may be useful if the PCs beg him for assistance and put up with his perorations for a little while. He scorns gifts other than food or useful clothing and items.

Austragild will attend the meeting at Stainahring and will be one of the more unpleasant speakers, favoring an entire different region for the Valaquetta (make your pick according to your campaign), constantly arguing against the PCs, etc. In short, he is intended as a peaceful antagonist who should be countered with diplomacy and persuasion rather than the sword.

Babbad & Grattar

These are a pair of Mountain Trolls from Dol Guldur, armed with spiked clubs. Mountain Trolls are a further development of Morgoth's original Stone Trolls. Whereas the primitive Stone Trolls are turned to stone when struck by the sun's rays, Mountain Trolls are able to operate under such conditions for short periods of time (though they do suffer from this exposure and take damage). The end product of this development will be the Olog-hai of the late Third Age, who are immune to daylight. Every new developmental step in the improvement of the Trolls is spawned unto Middle-earth to trouble the Free Peoples and further Sauron's goals by making life more difficult for Eru's children.

Babbad and Grattar are the remnants of a raiding party from Dol Guldur that was ambushed and nearly annihilated by a force of Gondorian knights investigating the strange destruction of the road there near the wood of Rhúnost. They alone were able to escape into the forest. While thinking what to do (it took a good deal of time for the two Trolls to do so) they were encountered by Râisha and pressed into service through her commanding ability.

They have been sent to capture one of the inhabitants of the vessel, something which they should surely be large and dangerous enough to do, unless the denizens are powerful indeed. Babbad is the brighter of the two, while Grattar is keen-sighted for a Troll and somewhat larger. They will seek to kill anyone associated with the vessel if they cannot capture them easily.

Each carries a quantity of rope and twine, and a net set with little metal hooks. They also have a flask each of Orkish revivative cordial, several large sacks with a small quantity of treasure (gold jewelry, carved bone and ivory, chunks of semi-precious crystal etc) in them, and a selection of iron knives, wickedly barbed and honed to a fine edge.

Dasron

Although already dead when the adventure proper begins he is still an important NPC. It is his restless spirit that tries to push the PCs into action and helps them as best he can, giving hints about the direction they have to go, or warnings of imminent danger, etc. Be careful, however, with the information given by him. Remember that he is not thinking rationally anymore, and so can give only vague and general assistance (otherwise it would be a bit too easy for the PCs).

Gwilithaur

This servant of Sauron is a kindred spirit of Râisha, and yet a far more deadly original. For Gwilithaur is a true vampiress, a fearsome creature with legendary magical abilities, a being shrouded in her own race's nocturnal secrecy. Little is known of vampires, and all of it is bad. Whence they came, only Morgoth and his chief servants might guess. It is generally assumed among the Wise that they are lesser Maiar lured into Morgoth's service long ago. (For more information on Morgothic vampires, see ICE's *Creatures of Middle-earth*.)

Gwilithaur has innate magical skills owing to her supernatural origin. These include talons capable of tearing through even metal armor (treated as broadsword attacks), great speed and agility, power over darkness and power in dark places, and resistance to normal weapons. Most importantly, she can assume the form of a giant bat and fly through the night with total silence and deadliness. Additionally, she owns a magic cloak which lends more magic powers including concealment, protection and movement.

Gwilithaur operates independently from Râisha. She was sent from Dol Guldur to investigate the strange occurrences perceived by the Dark Lord. Gwilithaur is part of the Conclave of Dol Guldur (See ICE's *Dol Guldur*.) and holds the title of a *malaugash* - something like a bishop in the clerical hierarchy of Dol Guldur (*laugashî* being the priests, *fhalaugash* the pope, and *burlaugash* the deity). Her capability of flight made her the best choice for this ad-hoc mission.

Gwilithaur is capable of commandeering two companies of Orcs and up to ten *laugashî* within one day's time. She could also have command over a few elite rangers (*grimburî*) from Dol Guldur. This fighting force could be used to make the showdown a bit more dramatic. Use or discard this option at your discretion. Alter its strength and/or composition according to your party and campaign. Alternatively ICE's *War Law* (or any other Mass Combat System) could be used to play out this large-scale engagement. It is suggested to use the normal combat rules only where PCs are engaged.

The purpose of having two similar opponents (capable of flight and looking similar when spotted in the air) in this adventure is to confuse the PCs. Should they learn the identity of one, have them encounter the other next time to throw them off and ruin any plans they might have prepared. Both have similar aims, of course. One or other appears whenever there's an opportunity for sabotaging the Entwives' plans, or any activities that the PCs are undertaking on their behalf. Both take extreme pains never to be caught or slain, though they don't mind risking a little harm. They are also sensible in their use of magic and won't over-stretch themselves. Both these foes are dangerous and should be used with careful restraint against lower level parties.

Kaldahilmya

Kaldahilmya is a pleasant man (52 years old) from the small Gramiska village of Brunninsburg associated with the holy spring named Wothiwatins Brunna. Kalda-

hilmya serves his community dutifully and is both respected and liked.

He will attend the council of Erthakuni addressed by the Sairolva. Initially, he will be in favor of the Valaquetta being planted in current Gramiska territory, but when he realizes that nearly every priest wishes this for his region he will eventually join the group favoring the resurrection of the Brown Lands.

Kaldahilmya should be used as a benevolent NPC favoring the most sensible solution. He could encounter the PCs near Brunninsburg while searching for plants, the strange ship, or whatever you like. His pleasant character and respected reputation should make him a valuable ally in all interactions with the local Grama, especially the meeting at Stainahring.

The priest owns a magical staff and has special powers connected with Wothiwatins Brunna. In the vicinity of the spring, he has x2 PP and an additional 48 PP which can be used to cast the following spells: *Water Production I*, *Water Production V*, *Area Protection II*, *Waterwall*, *Water Bolt* (100'). He can also cast these spells away from the spring by paying ½ the normal PP cost and using ¼ pint (0.1l) of Wothiwatins Brunna water/PP used. Kaldahilmya also is skilled in herblore.

Lótesanga

Lótesanga (a.k.a. Loblolly the Lithe, see ICE's *Lords of Middle-earth III*.83) is somewhat younger than her leader, and had greater dealings with Men than any other Sairolva. A slender evergreen with haunting brown eyes and veins of ochre striations which give her a delicate appearance. Lótesanga looks a bit leafy and bushy, and speaks in a rather jolly tone.

She left the gardens even before the War of the Last Alliance around SA 1700. The War of Sauron with the Elves caused unrest in her and she decided to meet other people in less troubled regions in the East. Searching for the most beautiful garden in all of Middle-earth, she found in the Valaquetta Olvaron. After the destruction of the Gardens south of Greenwood the remaining Sairolvar went east as well and over time some encountered Lótesanga. She told them of the Valaquetta and together they delved into its secrets as best as they could.

Loblolly holds a special place in her heart for Mannish farmers who grow flowers and once would pass the long summer days singing them lullabies as they worked in the gardens and slept beneath her shade. Accordingly she is much happier than any of the other Sairolvar at speaking to Men, and therefore has volunteered to contact Dasron and risk visiting the priest's council. However, she is still exceedingly strong and very tough. Her appealing voice gives her a +25 bonus for Influencing Men.

Ormecáno

The leader of the Sairolvar, Ormecáno is a stern and determined Entwife who nevertheless cares deeply about the fate of the Free Peoples in northwest Endor. She sees the mission as benefiting not only the Sairolvar but also all the inhabitants of the region. But most importantly for her is the possibility of rejoining the Onodrim, and seeking out her long lost love. Although very good at organizing her fellow Sairolvar, Ormecáno is not very adept at speaking with men or similar races. She does have a beautiful singing voice, and generally leads the chants to call the Cemincelmar. Ormecáno appears as dark green and somewhat prickly at first, but when she sings she reveals a lighter and softer side.

Priests of Stainahring

The three Erthakuni priests who tend to the Erknastath of Stainahring are Athalareth, Berning and Albarík. They are somewhat elderly and revered accordingly by the other regional Erthakuni priests. They organize the meeting with Lótesanga by sending word to all priests within reach.

The powers and levels of these priests should be adjusted to your campaign. I would suggest levels between 8 and 15 (the range given for their stats). Animists (or Clerics/Druids for RM) of this level should be able to array a lot of power and abilities (especially within the Stainahring). ICE's *Lords of Middle-earth* offers useful guidelines for assigning magic items appropriate to the level of their owner. (I suggest +10 to +20 bonus items and x2 to x3 spell multipliers.)

Assign them the position you need in your campaign (strengthening the PCs' position or their opposition). They are a good balancing factor during the meeting. Apart from extraordinary circumstances, they should be able to repel any attempts of forcing access to the site of meeting.

Other Gramiska personalities might taken from generic descriptions in ICE's publications on this area. In general they should be ca. level 6-12. Assign them items as needed and appropriate. Their behavior reflects their role: a chieftain's primary concern will be his people (and his own power of course), while a merchant will see to his profit etc.

Râisha

Râisha is a part-Variag scout with a peculiar upbringing and background. Her ancestor was Ûvatha who later became the ninth of Sauron's Ringwraiths. While the Variag lord had many children, one of them enjoyed his particular favor. Despite being from a mistress, he cared that this boy would be educated well. The father seemed to be ever young and immortal while his children aged. The boy however proved to be one his most trusted servants and was rewarded with a special item given to him by the Dark Lord: an amulet which served to preserve a man's health through his years.

Though in no way does it have the might of a Ring of Power, it is useful since it preserves vigor and health beyond the normal span of a mortal (though it does **not** prolong the mortal's existence within Arda beyond his normal span). The price is however high; like the rings, it enhances the wearer's innermost desires and fosters his sympathies for the Dark Lord. Like the son, many of his descendants followed the path of Ûvatha loyally and so this line is among his most trusted servants. The Nazgûl watched over them as they proved to be loyal to him through all obstacles. Perhaps they also remind him of some of his lost humanity (similar to the two personalities of Gollum).

Râisha as the current representative of this line now serves the Dark Lord as well as her ancestors. Her primary missions include infiltration, spying and subterfuge in general. Her headquarter is in Mistrand but she is often away on missions for her master in Rhovanion. She is one of his most valuable agents.

Râisha has many peculiar skills and abilities, including a well-developed empathy with her "pet" great bat, Tuma-sesh. She is talented in sorcery and has been entrusted with an amulet to boost her powers. This amulet is of a strange alloy metal and precious stone like tiger's eye which glows luminously when its power is drawn on; to be used it has to be placed to the forehead. Its use also allows Ûvatha access to her thoughts and perceptions.

She also (naturally) knows the use of poison and carries *ᴀsgurath*, blade hemlock and *jegga*. Other offensive abilities include her knife, and a magical gold ring shaped like the body and head of a black dragon which can shoot a *Darkbolt* 3x/day. (See *Rolemaster Companion II*. If this is unavailable, use *Shockbolt*.)

Typically, Râisha likes to fly silently and swoop upon a victim, using poisoned cross-

bow-bolts from a distance (or sometimes a blowgun), and either a scimitar or the knife close to. She is very apt at the use of poisons and carries a wide selection with various effects on her person. Tuma-sesh can attack with her when commanded.

Râisha's deadliest weapon is the Sturgurnak. By chanting a certain Word of Command, the power locked within the stone bursts forth, unleashing a torrent of all-consuming fire which spews for 155 yards (140m) in every direction. The wielder itself is spared from the full power of the conflagration because the torrents of fire merge a few meters around her, taking "only" a "B" Heat critical every round. (Anything other than a servant of the Secret Fire or a wielder of the Flame of Anor will be reduced to ashes instantaneously on contact with the blast.)

If you really want to roll the damage, I propose to treat it as a +100 Fire Ball (10x damage, criticals increased 2 levels with a special +50 on their rolls) attack for 3 rounds, with repeated heat criticals every round until the area is left. Each time the power is used with the correct phrase, there is a 66% chance that the stress is too much, breaking the crystal's structure and leaving the stone broken and useless afterwards. Unleashing the power without the phrase destroys the gem automatically after the blast is released.

Sigutains

Sigutains is Thridyawulf's 36-year old son. He is his fathers' eyes and ears in the region. It is he who goes to the seats of other *thignoʊ* or on other political missions. He is known throughout southern and southwestern Rhovanion as an honest and trustworthy partner. He shares his father's ambition and wits but lacks the experience and caution of his sire. In fact he is quite reckless, especially when faced with injustice or an promising opportunity. During the adventure Sigutains is again in charge of the foreign affairs of his tribe, visiting other *thignoʊ* and urging them and all Erthakuni priests he can find to the meeting.

Thiudarík

Thiudarík is another agent of the Dark, but does not serve Sauron directly. He is employed by one of the cults of dark priests who worship the images of Morgoth and Sauron as the black Lords of Night. More specifically, he belongs to the Cult of the Long Night. (See *Mirkwood*, p. 58.) He is a ranger of the plains, a Gramiska Northman from south-central Rhovanion.

Thiudarík appears fair and pleasant of character, only revealing his darker side in unintentional slips - and these very infrequently. He is known to many of the villages in the area as a tough man, sometimes distant and cool, but respectable. Strangely enough, if anyone is hard pressed, no one can ascribe to him any important noble or even useful deed, but neither are there any evil tales of him.

He dresses in traditional dull brown and green linen clothes and wears a steel and brass scale mail shirt. He has hair of a sandy color and the healthy look of the outdoors; his eyes are blue and he sports a trimmed beard and moustache. He wears a well-worn broadsword and carries a bundle of 4 light spears, suitable for throwing or using in the hand. He also has an unusual ivory knife in a stained bone sheath, and around his neck is a silver chain pendant set with a small ruby. All these three items are magical; the sheath can cast *Tracking* 2x/day and the ruby is a x2 PP multiplier. Thiudarík himself knows some magic spells. (Take your pick.)

Thiudarík will seek the aid of the PCs, professing to be concerned about the suborning of some of the local religions by the forces of evil. The arrival of the Dark Ship (as he insists on calling it) is a sign that some great evil is soon to be released, a spell or ritual that might permanently blight all the lands and forests east of the Anduin. He will attempt to persuade the PCs to organize an attack on the Dark Ship.

Perhaps Thiudarík could persuade them to hire some mercenaries; 4 days of hard ride may bring a PC to Unsibyaburg (Strayhold) to hire a band of unscrupulous mercenaries. (See ICE's *Brigandʊ of Mirkwood* for more details on Strayhold.) It is ca. 190 miles (305km) from Rhúnost to Unsibyaburg (primary road). For distance and travelling time within the adventure region refer to the adventure's regional map and the Strategic Movement Chart in MERP or RM. If using this option be sure that there is sufficient time left for such a venture.

Alternatively he might propose to attack the Sairolvar (perhaps with mercenaries) when they start the transplanting of the Valaquetta. He will not however press them against overt proof that he is wrong. If the PCs are suspicious about his motives or recognize the Entwives as the good guys, he pretends to see his error and helps them. In this case he will take the first chance to do as much damage as possible before fleeing. Preferably all witnesses are to be killed so that he can keep his ruse in the region.

Thridyawulf

Thridyawulf is the *thign* of the Hrothimannans clan whose chief settlement is Stainahring. He is an old (61 years) and experienced leader who is chiefly concerned with the strengthening of his people's position within the power structure of southern Rhovanion. To this end he made quite close friendship with the Gondorian governor in Rhúnost. Although Thridyawulf knows that his people are the junior partners in this deal, the mutual benefit from this cooperation outweighs any doubts he might have about allying with the Men of the West.

At first Thridyawulf is skeptical about the fantastic stories of the Erthaithíns returning, but when he sees Lótesanga at the meeting he is overawed by her presence, counseling his people to support their ancient teachers. It is his word that turns the representatives of the other towns and clans to come to this rather strange meeting. (Who believes rumors that your ancient goddesses have returned and are asking for your help?)

Beside the spiritual importance and impact of the Sairolvar's plan, Thridyawulf sees enormous potential for his people. If the ancient gardens were to be revived, his people might become the most important food producers in this corner of the world. The skills of the ancient mistresses combined with the prospective fertility of the land might gain his people a decisive edge in Rhovanic politics. If he is acting clever he might even unite the Grama into one nation and who knows, perhaps is this economical power strong enough make himself or his son a king...

STATISTICS

NAME/#	LEVEL	PP	HITS	AT	DB	MELEE OB	MISSILE OB	NOTES
SAIROLVAR								
Ormecáno	29	87	290	CH/16	40	130 HBa 120 HGr 160 HCr	-	Entwife; Huge
Lótesanga	26	78	260	CH/11	30	110 HBa 100 HGr 95 HCr	-	Entwife; Huge
ERTHAKUNI								
Albarík	8	16	50	NO/2	20	45 qs	10 sp	Rural Man Animist
Athalareth	13	39	70	NO/2	25	60 qs	15 sp	Rural Man Animist
Berning	10	20	60	NO/2	15	50 qs	10 sp	Rural Man Animist
Kaldahilmya	7	7	46	SL/5	0	40 qs* 30 sp	10 sb 5sp	Rural Man Animist; *Protections* (5), *Nature's Lore* (5), *Plant Mastery* (5), *Purifications* (5), *Spring Waters* (5)**; Westron (5), Gramiska (5), Ehwathrumiska (3), Tawarlam (2), Logathig (2); *Quarterstaff* +10 OB and *detect water* within 180' (55m).
Austragild	5	10+5*	45	SL/5	10	30 sp 15 da	25 sp	Rural Man Animist, *Protections* (4), *Surface Ways* (4), *Animal Mastery* (4), *Direct Channelling* (4); Westron (5), Gramiska (5), Logathig (3); * *Magic Belt* and *Ring of Stunning*
GRAMA								
Thridyawulf	16	-	120	CH/13	40	120 bs	90 sp	Gramiska Warrior. DB includes shield, +15 equipment
Sigutains	8	-	140	CH/13	60	115 bs	90 sp	Gramiska Warrior. DB includes shield, +10 equipment
NECROMANCER'S MINIONS								
Babbad	16	-	173	CH/12	25	170 wh	-	Olog; Large; club hits as warhammer with double damage because of sheer size
Grattar	14	-	196	CH/12	25	162 wh	~	Olog; Large; club hits as warhammer with double damage because of sheer size
Râisha	15	15+12	110	SL/8	40	85 kn* 65 sc	80 xbow* 59 da	*Poisoned; Variag Scout; *Essence Hand* (5), *Spirit Mastery* (5), *Spell Ways* (5); Sindarin (5), Westron (5), Morlam (5), Quenya (2); *Empathy* with great bats
Tuma-sesh *Mounted*	7	-	80	SL/4	30	50 MBi	-	Great Bat, SpdVF
Unmounted					60	75 MBi/60 MCl	-	

NAME/#		LEVEL	PP	HITS	AT	DB	MELEE OB	MISSILE OB	NOTES
Gwilithaur	*humanoid*	22	88	200	NO/3	80	spells 120 we	spells	Vampiress; Large, Spd VF*; 15+ Spell Lists; *without magic cloak she is DB 55 and Spd FA.
	Giant Bat						130 HC1 90 LBi 80 LBa	spells	
Thiudarík		8	16*	91	SL/7	25/40	101 kn** 75 sp 60 bs	65 sp	Gramiska Ranger; * x2 PP mult; ** +10 ivory knife; *Nature's Guises* (6), *Surface Ways* (5), *Spell Defences* (5); Westron (5), Gramiska (5), Morlam (4), Ehwathrumiska (3), Sindarin (3)
GENERIC NPCS									
Asdriag captain/1		6	-	90	RL/10	30	80 us	50 cb	Asdriag Fighter; DB includes shield; us: *ωriev* may be used either as lance or 2-handed sword.
Asdriag warrior/20		3	-	60	SL/9	30	55 us	40 cb	Asdriag Fighter; DB includes shield; us: *ωriev* may be used either as lance or 2-handed sword.
Ehwathrumiska captain/1		7	-	110	CH/13	40	90 sp	65 cb	Northman Fighter, DB includes shield.
Ehwathrumiska soldier/20		3	-	70	RL/10	25	60 sp	45 cb	Northman Fighter, DB includes shield.
Sairolvar/26		24-28	48-56	250-280	RL/11	25-40	110+Gr/Cr	-	Entwives; Huge.
Gondorian captain/1		9	-	130	CH/16	45	110 bs	90 lb	Dúnadan Fighter; DB includes shield.
Gondorian sergeant/4		6	-	90	CH/15	40	85 bs	60 lb	Dúnadan Fighter; DB includes shield.
Gondorian soldier/40		4	-	80	CH/14	35	70 bs	50 lb	Lesser Dúnadan Fighter; DB includes shield.
Gramiska elite warrior/1		5	-	85	CH/13	35	80 ha	55 lb	Northman Fighter, DB includes shield.
Gramiska warrior/10		3	-	65	SL/7	25	55 ha	40 lb	Northman Fighter, DB includes shield.
Grimburî		8	12	100	RL/10	45	100 bs	110 sb	Elite rangers; DB does not include shield; two to three spell lists.
Laugashî		10	10-20	80	NO/2	5-40	50 da	10 da	Mannish priests/sorcerers from Dol Guldur; 10 lists to 10th lvl; PP's do not include multipliers or adders.
Orc captain (Drartûl)/1		8	-	95	CH/16	25	100 ms	80 sb	Orc warrior; leads a company (Dagor-dirn); DB includes shield.
Orc sergeant (Ujâk)/10		7	-	85	CH/15	20	90 sc	65 sb	Orc warrior, leads a group (10 Orcs); DB includes shield.
Orc warrior (Dog)/100		3	-	60	RL/10	30	55 sc	20 sb	Adult Orc warriors; DB includes shield.
Erthakuni priests		4-10	4-20	30-70	NO/2	5-40	varies	varies	Mannish animists. May posess spell bonus items.
Cemincelmar/ca. 300		5-10	-	55-100	NO/4	60-75	special	-	only harmed by magic or magic weapons; special attack.

RASTARIN'S LOG

Bridget Buxton

EPISODE NINE: DEATH IS A RELATIVE TERM

This last chapter of Rastarin's Log sets the stage for the final epic battle between the forces of evil and some other people. Could Gondor's fate hinge on a choice between power and the Life of a friend? And who will side with whom in the battle for the thrones of the Living and the Dead? Luckily the strange voices in Rastarin's head seem to have all the answers...

We rejoin Rastarin and Daeron, Steward of Gondor, in the Lord-Captain's quarters at Pelargir, where Rastarin is about to reveal her darkest secret...

'I'm worried, Daeron,' she confesses. 'My uncle Neithan knew something I don't-' *You have no free will of your own* ' - and he killed himself-' *It was your fault!*'...and now, I have these disturbing voices in my head. Somehow, I think they are trying to tell me that this powerful ambition that drives me is, in fact, eeeeevil....'

'Nonsense!' exclaims Daeron.

'But I'm a descendant of Berúthiel and the King's Men of Númenor. The prophet of Melkor said to Eärnil that in the tenth generation after he was killed, that seed would reawaken and wreck ruin for Gondor. Now did that prophecy refer to my uncle Neithan, or does it refer to me?' *You are a servant of Sauron.*

'But the ruin of which Gondor? The piece of crap that we live in now, or the one that is to come with your glorious ascension ?' *Yeah ! Power! Drink more!*

'Then come! Let us end this destructive conflict and impose order upon the galaxy! Together we can rule Middle-earth, as Steward and Queen!' shouts Rastarin, brandishing her spoon. 'And with this spoon, I shall slay Irusan and any who dare oppose me!'

'Go do it then!' says Daeron, and they toast their destiny. *Kill him later.*

Rastarin clutches her head and cries out in anguish. 'No, I won't kill him!'

'I thought you said you were going to,' remarks Daeron, surprised. 'You must not lose your resolve, Rastarin.'

'No indeed,' she agrees, struggling to recover her composure. 'But - forgive my doubts, Daeron - would you allow me to look into your eyes and test your loyally?'

'Take a good long look!' Daeron replies, pulling her close.

Careful –he's betrayed you before and he'll do it again!

But to Rastarin, Daeron's gaze reveals only the complete sincerity of his support for her, and even (to her utter surprise) deep feelings of love.

'Daeron, tomorrow I shall go to defeat Irusan. But I should like to spend this night... with you.'

Yuck! Do you know how OLD he is?

'I was hoping you would say that,' Daeron replies.

Higher love wins. Higher love means a dagger. Stab him in the heart and burn him! You liked it before, you'll like it again - burn him, burn him, burn him!!!

At this point we must return to our friends aboard the new TCBS, where the clam party is now in full swing. And when a piercing scream cuts the night and the hosts of clam eaters look up, none of Rastarin's crew is particularly alarmed. After all, their Captain has slain all the men she has taken a fancy to previously. But Clennan's hearing is more discerning, and he looks longingly at Gypsy as he realises that all his secret hopes have been betrayed. He can only comfort himself with the familiar advice of his beloved Captain: that as a man of lesser race, he may as well get used to disappointment...

The next morning, Rastarin takes leave of Daeron on the steps of the Lord Captain's house. 'Farewell, Daeron. I lo-I- *No! That's a pathetic thing to say – don't say it!* ...really ...like you, Daeron. Goodbye!'

At the docks an admiring crowd is gathered around the new TCBS. Rastarin addresses them from the bow, promising to rid the land of Irusan, and bring peace with Umbar. The crowd roars their approval. 'Yeah! Yeah! Kill the bastards!'

'As you see, I bear the Karma of Aldarion and the Gwaedhel sword, and this: the signet ring of Sangahyandion of the house of Castamir.' She pauses until they fall silent. 'Whose cause, that Gondor should one day become PURE -in every sense of the word - I now make my own!'

'Save us Rastarin! Save us! Only you can save us!' shrieks the crowd. I think she's mad,' adds a small voice from the back as TCBS departs.

Never averse to combining their mission for world peace with a bit of piratical plundering, the crew of TCBS decide to break their voyage with a little visit to castle Vamag, fortress of the late evil sorcerer Herod.

I have a cunning plan,' Rastarin announces. 'Let's trash the castle and steal the treasure!'

'Yeah, let's rob the rich and make ourselves richer,' agrees Konar.

At the great wooden doors of Vamag they are greeted by Herod's doorman Malik, who ushers Rastarin inside with most of her crew behind her.

'You know, of course, about my agreement to serve your master,' says Rastarin. 'I wish to make preparations for his arrival. Summon all the castle staff so that I may give them their instructions.'

'Of course,' murmurs Malik. He leads them into an enclosed barbican where heavy doors close behind them.

'I brought my favourite booty sack,' whispers Ray to Clennan.

'Hush! Keep those sacks out of sight,' hisses Rastarin.

'Why don't you ask if all the guards will put up their weapons and go down into the dungeon...?' whispers Konar.

'No, Konar, I think that would be a little too obvious. Why don't you just stick to what you're good at and leave the thinking to me?'

Just then Malik motions them to halt. 'I'm afraid we'll be staying here for now. My master does not wish any to enter his halls.' Rastarin draws herself up haughtily.

'You forget who I am!'

On the contrary, my master has told me everything about you. And now I

must perform his final command.' Malik raises his hand, and suddenly a portcullis smashes down in front of them. 'It's a trap!' shrieks Ray, as a deluge of boiling oil sears his bald spot.

'Die, you bum boy!' shouts Rastarin, lunging at Malik with drawn blade. Before she can strike, Konar's great sword flies whistling over her head and under Malik's, sending it flying. 'Don't worry, they were split ends anyways, Rastarin!' he shouts.

'They are now!'

Konar and Clennan seize the portcullis and lift it enough for the men to dive under one by one. Ray is the last through... almost. The portcullis falls, pinning him to the ground. 'Help! I'm dead!' he cries.

'We haven't had much luck with our navigators recently,' Rastarin complains.

'At least his bad tooth won't bother him anymore,' adds Konar. But their contemplation of Ray's demise is interrupted by the suicidal attacks of Herod's servants - who are now upon them.

Thereupon the great battle of Vamag ensues, of which many songs have been sung which nobody believes, and rightly so. Rastarin, wielding for the first time the mighty Gwaedhel sword, sends many of Herod's slaves down the dark path of their evil master. 'Impressive,' she says, as one of Vamag's better fighters parries her blade. 'Why are you defending that fool Herod? He's dead!'

'I am a fanatic!' he cries in a fanatical voice as Rastarin cuts him in half. 'Haven't you ever heard of mind control?'

'Gotta head start on you, Konar,' she cries, as her decapitation score passes his by one. Konar, although blinded by his helmet for the entire fight, nevertheless does priceless damage to many unsuspecting walls, pillars, and architectural mouldings. More could be told, but to cut a long slaughter short: all resistance is broken, dismembered, and burned in great fire in the central courtyard - along with piles of rich furniture, clothing, and irreplaceable paintings.

'Can't sell that – it's irreplaceable!' explains Damrod.

'You idiots! You're burning everything of value!' cries Rastarin. 'Don't you realise that every pair of Herod's silk underwear is worth one hundred mina?'

'They're tainted!' shouts Clennan. 'This isn't a raid – it's a purging!'

'Yeah!' agrees Konar. 'The dread fist of justice has triumphed. No more silk underwear!'

'Scrumpy!!' shouts the crew, and there is much drinking and celebration, and then more burning.

Departing the smoking ruins of Herod's castle, TCBS finally sets sail for the lands that border Irusan's realm among the Oathbreakers.

'Hey Konar, what'll -we do with all these leftover clams?' asks Clennan.

'Ah, we'll save them until they go bad!' shouts Konar. And so after many days the clams go bad, and then worse, so that by the time TCBS reaches Cape Endil they have become truly evil. There they are met on the forlorn shore by two shadowy figures that Rastarin and Clennan recognize as their long lost companions, Lytta and Skas. Remembering the Oathbreakers' anger for her explosive destruction of their fellow clansmen at Minas Andhen, Rastarin greets Skas warmly, and begins to relate all the good deeds she has been perform-

ing for the Ruadh clan since their last meeting.

'She said she threw the lantern but she didn't light it,' adds Konar helpfully.

Skas hisses.

'Yeah it was Clennan!' shouts Damrod as Clennan punches him.

Skas ignores them. 'I have been told to bring the sword to my Lord Sualdaim.'

'But - I thought only a mortal could wield the sword against Irusan?'

'This is a matter of clan business. The sword will be returned to you in time.'

'That's not what King Morthec told me,' argues Rastarin. 'Besides, this sword – it's more than just a sword. It's... it's... my precious, and I wants it.'

'For the last time,' Skas hisses. 'The sword. Or your sister dies, and Morthond burns.'

'I'll die before I give it to you now!'

'Very well,' Skas replies, and hurls two vials of naurnen at her, both of which are fortuitously intercepted by Damrod, who explodes in a brilliant fireball.

'I think you should give them the sword,' Konar advises.

'Well, since you put it that way, I will entrust the sword to Lytta,' says Rastarin. 'But only if you promise to return it to me before the final battle with Irusan.'

'I swear it will be returned to you - as soon as may be,' Lytta promises.

'Oh my precious,' Rastarin weeps as the Oathbreakers depart -with her beloved sword. 'I've lost everything now!'

'It's not so bad, Rastarin,' soothes Clennan. 'At least we still have all these leftover clams.'

As it turns out, clams aren't the only things that have been going bad. During Rastarin's long absence, Irusan's plots have been bearing evil fruit among the Oathbreakers. Morthec, the rightful King of the Dead, has mysteriously vanished. In his wake, Sualdaim, undead chieftain of the fierce Ruadh clan, has won over the majority of the clans to his allegiance, falsely promising them release from Isildur's Curse. In fact, Sualdaim owes his success to a secret pact with Irusan, for which he had to trade the hearts (and thereby the souls) of a hundred living Ruadh warriors. At the moment, though, neither the spectral Lytta nor the skeletal Skas are aware of their chieftain's deception, and intend to dutifully fulfill Sualdaim's command for them to seize the Gwaedhel-sword from Rastarin.

Arriving swiftly at the Paths of the Dead, Skas and Lytta are brought before Sualdaim, who now sits upon Morthec's throne. Sualdaim stands as they enter, and Lytta lays the Gwaedhel-blade at his feet. 'Ah, the sword. You have done well, Skas and you, Lytta. But my need for it is no longer urgent. Morthec's remaining supporters have yielded to me.'

'What of Irusan?' Skas asks.

'We shall let Irusan be. He will not dare to attack us now!'

Lytta is horrified by the changes that have taken place in the Paths since her departure. 'Had I known for what purpose you wished to obtain this thing, I would have been less eager to help,' she says angrily, and leaves in search of Ygana. The prophetess, now virtually a prisoner in her own quarters, implores

Lytta's aid.

'The clans must learn of Sualdaim's secret alliance with Irusan,' Ygana says. But there is only one witness to it. His name is Bain Druin of the Uasal clan, and he is being held prisoner at Galibur, Irusan's lair. You must bring him here so that the clans may see the error of their ways - before it is too late.'

Lytta leaves at once, soon overtaking Rastarin, Clennan, and Konar as they make their way on foot to Galibur. 'Lytta!' cries Rastarin. 'Where's my sword? Did you bring it?'

'Umm... not just yet. I'm afraid we have - how shall I put it? A bit of a problem.' Lytta's account of the recent political developments at the Paths is incomprehensible to the living, but since she seems to be the only one who knows what's going on they agree to help her to rescue Bain Druin from Galibur.

Ascending into the highland valleys of Belfalas, they reach the stronghold of Irusan and launch a desperate attempt to free Bain. In their fight with Bain's guards they are aided by Skas (who has likewise repented of his allegiance to Sualdaim) and Bain himself, a bestial corpse whose rotten flesh supports an impressive growth of fungi. Irusan's foul sorcery has robbed Bain of his heart.

'Give me back my heart!' Bain groans, seizing a sword that has become conveniently embedded in Skas' ribcage and shambling towards his captors. Lytta joins them, thrusting her spectral hands into the bodies of the living and ripping out their insides.

'It's not so much the fact of being disemboweled, but that empty feeling afterwards that is oh so very reminiscent of death...' Skas observes thoughtfully.

But Bain's guards are not just hapless mortal villagers. Soon two darkly cloaked figures appear on top of Irusan's barrow. 'You will never escape this vale!' one of them shouts.

'I've escaped tougher paper bags than this!' Konar yells back. Clennan shoots at the speaker, but the latter saves himself by pulling his companion into the arrow's path. 'Summon the Masters of Death!' he orders, and Rastarin starts at the oddly familiar voice. 'Zimrakhil?' she whispers.

'That sounds bad,' says Clennan.

And indeed it is, for spirit assassins are now beginning to emerge from all the crypts around Galibur.

'Run for the lake!' shouts Skas. And so it is that the adventurers soon find themselves standing in a cold lake while Irusan's spirit assassins prowl menacingly along the shore, barred from entering the realm of Ulmo.

'What the hell are -we doing here?' groans Rastarin, now utterly despondent.

'Bain needs a heart, I need a brain, and Rastarin needs courage!' explains Konar. 'Don't worry, my friends - Turion is here to protect us!'

'That's a constant comfort,' says Clennan gloomily, as Konar s pet iguana regards them with total disinterest.

'We're all going to die. Why don't we just give up now? Irusan may be merciful. Surrender is a perfectly accepta-glug-glug-glug-' says Rastarin as Konar dunks her. Thus immersed, she suddenly remembers something Tevildo told her about the Lady of the Waters and the Karma... what was it?

'It's hopeless. There's no way we'll get out of here alive,' she thinks to herself, but the now familiar voices in her head protest. *No way that ALL of us will get out of here alive, true. But perhaps ONE of us, if the others were sacrificed for the cause?*

When Konar finally pulls her above water again, Rastarin is smiling. 'My friends, I have a cunning plan,' she announces, and motions for them to stay while she wades over to the edge of the lake.

'Why are you still chasing me?' she asks the spirit assassins. 'I haven't got the sword. I've lost everything!'

'Then come with us,' they hiss in reply. 'Irusan will make you great!'

'He'll kill you!' shouts Lytta.

'Why should I listen to you? You're already dead!' Rastarin yells back.

'I prefer the term 'mortally challenged' myself,' puts in Skas. But Rastarin has already thrown herself into the power of the Irusan's minions, and only Bain dares to follow them back to Galibur. Konar, Clennan, Lytta, and Skas stand ignored on the shore of the lake and watch them depart.

'Well, look on the bright side,' concludes Skas philosophically. At least now THEY have to listen to all her speeches.'

Borne by spirit assassins to the very threshold of Irusan's lair, Rastarin's darkest hour is nigh. With Bain the corpse at her side, she dons the Karma and takes a hearty shot of scrumpy before descending the steps into the barrow of Galibur. It is well that she does so. For in the center of the chamber, enthroned amidst steaming braziers and wells of dark water, sits the evil Lord Irusan himself. The mighty undead sorcerer wears a crown of gold on his skeletal brow, and a pale light gleams out of the empty sockets of his eyes.

'My dear Irusan,' Rastarin laughs. 'I fooled you into tricking me all along. But now I've got you right where you wanted me!'

'Why didn't you bring me the sword - when you had the chance?' Irusan snarls.

'Is it not in your hands already, in the hands of the chieftain who serves you?'

'Sualdaim has betrayed me.' 'So? You're still more powerful.'

'Yes - without the sword. But now HE has the sword - and YOU gave it to him!'

Rastarin smiles and backs away slightly. *Oh oh, I think he's really mad.*

'Why have you come here?' he growls.

'I just want to understand,' she says. 'Why did you help Sangahyandion and Arkhad, and then kill them? Why didn't Zimrakhil kill me? Does he serve you, or someone else? It doesn't make any sense. What do you want with me, anyway?'

Irusan chuckles. 'You understand more of your role in our purpose than you care to admit, Rastarin. But as for Zimrakhil, he serves me now, because he seeks your death. Because you destroyed his ship.'

'Herod's creature destroyed the Aranwil, not I.'

'Perhaps you would like to tell him that yourself,' Irusan replies, and at his summons a stooped and limping figure emerges from the shadows behind the throne. It is Zimrakhil.

Rastarin laughs. 'Zimrakhil, you look like you've been up a monster's ass.'

'I'm afraid I must concede that, Rastarin,' he replies stiffly. 'But let's try to talk about this like civilised people. You have seen things which you think have deceived you, but in fact they have not. I have always attempted to help you, to assist you in achieving your goals...'

'So where does that leave us now?'

Zimrakhil thinks for a while, and then seems to smile. 'Well, I suppose that all depends on what you hope to achieve. I may be able to help you.'

Rastarin sits on the stone steps and sighs. 'Unless you can bring back the dead and change history, there's nothing you-'

'Aaaaah yes, Zimrakhil interrupts, resting his skeletal hand on her shoulder.

'Good Sangahyandion. You want to have him back, don't you?'

'I can't deny it,' she replies bitterly. 'Though if he knew I obtained his life through a pact with evil powers, he would surely kill himself at once.' There is a long silence before she continues. 'But tell me... you CAN bring him back?'

'In a manner of speaking, perhaps.'

Rastarin thinks for a while before answering. 'I have never considered necrophilia, Zimrakhil... before now.'

'You should try it, it's quite stimulating,' he replies.

'Tell me more!' *Don't go there-*

'Behold,' growls Irusan, and with a wave of his hand the cavern fills with mist. Slowly, a figure steps through it into the light of the braziers and looks around in - wonder. It is Sangahyandion. *Ye Gods, what a stud muffin!*

Sangahyandion! Is it really you?' cries Rastarin, jumping up. *It's your one true love. You can kill him again!*

'What has happened to me Rastarin? Where am I?' Sangahyandion asks. Rastarin shakes her head, and her eyes fill with tears. 'But you - were dead. I saw your charred corpse!'

'Death is a relative term,' says Irusan.

'Especially in this game,' adds Zimrakhil. Irusan waves his hand and the image disappears.

'As you can see, I am perhaps able to bring him back on a more permanent basis,' Irusan says. Rastarin turns to him, great turmoil and grief in her eyes. *Step forward now, and your journey to the dark side will be complete!*

'What would you have,' she says at last, 'in return for Sangahyandion's life?'

Your soul. That's all. Not much really...

'I know that your friends have promised to return the Gwaedhel sword to you,' Irusan replies. 'You may keep this heirloom of your house, but I ask you for one thing: use it to slay Sualdaim who betrayed me.'

Rastarin paces the floor. 'A guest who escapes from the roof thinks twice before entering again by the front door, Irusan,' she says at last. 'What surety do I have that you'll keep your word?'

'I give no surety,' he snarls. 'I only give you your life!'

'But I came here to die!' she laughs.

'Zimrakhil, I tire of this conversation. See that she is killed at once.'

'By your command, my liege,' Zimrakhil answers, and at his summons the spirit assassins surround and seize her.

If you're going to do something, I really think you should do it now,' suggests Bain.

Yes! There's just enough time for one last, epic soliloquy!

Rastarin obligingly clears her throat, assuming her best Northman accent. 'Uinen, I have never prayed to you before. I have no tongue for it. No one - not even you - will know if we were good, or bad; why we fought, and why we died. All that matters is that few stood against many. So get down here and KICK SOME UNDEAD BUTT! And if you don't help me, the hell with you!'

At these words there is suddenly a loud gurgling from a well in the floor of the barrow, like a Balrog stuck in a drainpipe. A huge geyser of water erupts, tearing apart the spirit assassins as it coils around Irusan and drags him howling down into the ground. Rastarin grabs Zimrakhil, but is left holding only a skeletal forearm as the sorcerer too is torn away by Uinen's wrath. As she turns to flee the wreckage of the flooding chamber, Rastarin catches one last glimpse of Sangahyandion looking sadly after her. The image nods in grave approval, and then vanishes in the watery turmoil.

'Noooo!' she cries as Bain pulls her away. 'I take it all back; I'll serve Evil! Just give me a chance!' But it is already too late: the chamber collapses, and Rastarin and Bain barely make out of the barrow in time.

There they find themselves amidst a great pile of human hearts, the enslaved souls of Irusan's undead army. Bain joyfully recovers and re-installs his own defunct coronary equipment. The dread spoon of justice has triumphed!

'And now all we have to do,' says Lytta when they return to the lake, 'is go to the Paths, present Bain's testimony to the clans, overthrow Sualdaim-'

'-and get back my goddamned sword!' finishes Rastarin, but Skas hisses doubtfully. 'It would be unwise for you to accompany us into the Paths,' he warns her. 'The Ruadh have not forgotten your part in the slaughter of their kin at Minas Andhen.'

'Which is exactly why I must return - to prove my innocence,' Rastarin insists. 'Clennan and I promised to stand trial before the Dead, and we keep our promises! Don't we Clennan?'

'Uh, well that depends on what you mean by 'keep'...'

And so they return to the Paths of the Dead, where Clennan offers to stand guard outside during Rastarin's trial. 'It's not like I'm afraid or anything,' he explains.

'Of course not!' his companions answer in chorus.

'But us living people should be able to fight our battles with our swords and shields, and not have to deal with all this undead spirit kind of stuff.'

'And who needs brains when you've got testosterone?' remarks Rastarin.

'Yeah!' agrees Konar. 'I'll come with you, Rastarin. You're gonna need a good defence lawyer!' Lytta and Skas look at each other and groan.

Rastarin and Konar soon find themselves dragged before Sualdaim and a huge assembly of vengeful Oathbreakers, all chanting for Rastarin's blood. The charges are duly read: '...and that you willfully destroyed OVER ONE HUNDRED OF OUR FELLOW RUADH CLANSMEN-'

'I can explain everything!' Rastarin cries as the furious Oathbreakers pelt her with a hail of spectral tomatoes and garbage.

A full account of the famous trial that followed is not attempted here. Suffice it to say that it was on this occasion that the well-known saying arose: 'go not to a barbarian for a defence lawyer.' Nevertheless, Rastarin was still able to secure her acquittal in the time-honoured fashion, by blaming someone else ('Irusan made me do it!')

'Then you have done us a great service by destroying Irusan,' concludes Sualdaim. 'And for that you may leave here alive, never to return. But if any Ruadh meets you upon the path, you must bow and let him pass first.'

'Congratulations,' mutters Skas. 'Now get out of here while you still can!'

'What about my sword?' whispers Rastarin. 'You told me I'd get it back soon!'

'That time has not yet come,' Lytta answers impassively.

'Well... But you're undead.'

Skas laughs. If you're going to dine with the devil, you'll need a long spoon!'

'I should have known better than to trust an Oathbreaker,' mutters Rastarin. She turns to Sualdaim. 'My Lord, before I depart, I wish everyone here to hear what this corpse with the mushrooms growing out of him has to say.'

At that moment Bain steps forward, and with the magical aid of Ygana and Lytta a huge picture from his memory materializes on the walls of the cavern. It is Irusan and Sualdaim, standing before a pile of steaming hearts. A shocked silence settles over the crowd of watching Oathbreakers.

'You idiot! There's going to be riot!' hisses Skas.

'On second thought, perhaps I should leave now,' murmurs Rastarin. She backs furtively towards the doors, but is halted by the crossed spears of Sualdaim s guards.

'You have asked us to hear this testimony as a favour,' growls Sualdaim. 'Therefore you must stay, and also listen.'

'Uh... all right,' Rastarin stammers. 'I just want everyone to know that whatever happens, it wasn't my fault.'

The figures in the image speak.

Here are the troops I promised you,' says Irusan. I know you find my methods reprehensible, but it is for YOUR victory against Morthec that I have done this.'

They may be expendable,' sneers the image of Sualdaim. 'So long as you give them to me!' The rest of his words are lost as a huge roar of anger erupts throughout the hall. Sualdaim lunges for the Gwaedhel sword, but it is too late Rastarin beats him to it. 'Die you pig!' she cries, slashing the Oath-Sister through his spectral arm.

'You too - Lytta?' Sualdaim gasps as the Spirit-namer stabs him in the back. The deathbalm on her blade paralyses him for an instant of pure bliss before his enraged subjects tear him limb from limb.

And so unity is restored to the Oathbreakers, Rastarin recovers her precious sword, and Sualdaim gets a well-deserved spoon in the eye. Morthec, reappearing as mysteriously as he vanished, regains his rightful throne, and announces that from now on any Oathbreaker who meets Rastarin on the path will bow and let HER pass first. In short, everyone is happy except Skas. 'I don't walk on the path,' he grumbles.

Leaving the Dead behind, TCBS returns via Dol Amroth to Pelargir, where Rastarin's long-planned peace conference is about to take place. Lord Sangahyando is there on behalf of Umbar's Council of Captains, and many nobles from all around the realm are present. King Tarondor has come down with his wife and a crowd of supporters from Minas Anor, but is absent from the large welcoming party that greets the victorious return of the new TCBS.

'Someone must have ticked him off to my plans,' Rastarin guesses. 'I hope our business can still be resolved through peaceful negotiation.'

'Does that mean you want us to wait in the wings with bows like usual?' offers Clennan.

'Of course! When the time comes, I shall point out a number of select political targets for you to eliminate...'

As TCBS docks Rastarin dons the Karma and addresses the cheering crowd. 'The Karma has returned to Pelargir!' she cries. 'Irusan, destroyer of the Hall of the Faithful, is defeated!' Pelargir s mood is ecstatic, and Rastarin's popularity soars when (with the help of the innkeeper Burly Bob) the city is flooded with half-price scrumpy.

On the shore they are met by Daeron and Urranta, the leader of Pelargir's powerful Shipwrights Guild and father of Rassimus and Tarassis. 'Rastarin, I want to thank you for what you did for my son, securing his pardon and all,' he says. And I can tell you - you chose the right place to hold this peace conference ! Whatever you decide to do, Pelargir will support you.'

'Pelargir! My favourite city!' cries Rastarin, to enormous cheers of approval, but Daeron takes her arm and urges her gently away. I would be careful about showing too much favour to Pelargir if you also hope to secure the support of Northern Gondor,' he

whispers in her ear. 'That, if you don't mind my saying so, was Castamir's mistake.'

'So you still think I should go ahead with my original plan to become Queen?' Rastarin asks during their final strategy meeting. 'I don't want to take the path of my uncle Neithan, and risk having Tarondor's death on my conscience.'

'Why should you?' argues Daeron. 'Tarondor has demonstrated his inability to defend his realm from Umbar, and the Rebels won't negotiate until his line is deposed. I'll wager the Northern lords would rather sacrifice a weak king than risk another invasion and a civil war. Your claim is as good if not better than Tarondor's - AND you have the Karma.'

'Daeron, your foresight and history of unparalleled success in changing sides at the right time encourages me,' Rastarin concludes. 'If you still think I can pull this off, then I probably will!'

'But what will happen to TCBS and the scrumpy business?' asks Clennan.

'I'll give it all to you, Clennan. You can be the next Dread Pirate Rastarin.'

'I thought Rastarin was supposed to be a woman,' grunts Konar.

'I know,' she replies. 'But in this day and age, I don't think we should make such distinctions.'

'WHAT!?' the barbarian shouts, reaching for his sword.

And so that evening the great peace conference takes place. Rastarin presents her claim to the nobles and her ultimatum to the King, with the Steward standing conspicuously at her side. Lord Sangahyando also speaks, making it very clear to Tarondor's wavering supporters that war with Umbar will continue unless Rastarin's claim is recognised. Few fail to notice the signet ring of Castamir on Rastarin's hand, and none can doubt what it means. King Tarondor listens to the speeches in sullen silence, and then rises to speak himself...

'It is one thing to parade trophies through the streets and win over the mob with alcohol,' he says scornfully. 'But you will have to do more than seduce a few misguided courtiers to win the throne of Gondor, Captain Rastarin! Ilúvatar himself must approve of your claim - if you have the courage to take the test.'

'I do!' Rastarin replies, and the delegates at once take ship en masse for Minas Anor. From there Rastarin sets out alone for the hallow of the kings on Mount Mindolluin, while the others wait in one of the high courtyards of the city. At length Rastarin returns, looking somewhat unsure of herself. 'What was supposed to happen?' she whispers to Daeron.

'It is said that the hands of the king are the hands of a healer,' Tarondor says. 'And so the rightful king - or queen -could ever be known.'

'Then heal me!' cries Daeron, tearing open his shirt to reveal a long pale scar across his stomach, the famous knife wound he suffered at the hands of the original Dread Pirate. Rastarin places her hands upon the scar, and to the amazement of all (herself included) it disappears.

'How strange. It came off so easily,' Rastarin murmurs. 'Almost as if - No, no, you couldn't have...'

'That would have been foresight indeed,' Daeron replies, but his words are drowned amidst the victorious cheers of Rastarin's supporters. Tarondor casts down his sceptre and crown in disgust, departing into exile with his family and a handful of followers. Rastarin is duly proclaimed the first Queen of Gondor.

'The dread spoon of justice has triumphed,' she says as Daeron places the winged crown upon her head. 'And now we shall restore peace and order to Gondor, as Steward and Queen!'

Daeron, however, shakes his head. 'Don't you understand, Rastarin? I have served in that thankless office for decades, and now my work is finished. You must find yourself another Steward.'

'But I was counting on your help and advice!' cries Rastarin, dismayed.

'And you shall have it,' he replies with an enigmatic smile. After all, a Queen must have a King...'

'You cunning bastard!'

And so it came to pass that Waldarin of Morthond (princess, pirate, brewer, and queen 'by her own hand') usurped the throne of Gondor and married Daeron, taking the name Ancalimë in remembrance of her long-dead ancestor: Ancalimë-Berúthiel, foster-daughter of Fuinur. One might have observed that Rastarin, like her uncle Neithan, did inherit something of a black streak from her Númenórean ancestors. Was this then the ancient curse of Melkor foretold in the Berúthiel scroll, the seed reawakened to wreck ruin for Gondor? Rightly you may wonder how such a dark chapter in Gondor s history came to be forgotten, a curse deemed so abhorrent that its very memory was erased. In Minas Tirith I, Mithrandir, sought the answers. Therein lie many scrolls that few can now read, but there is one written by the hand of Rastarin herself: a history of her life and deeds. Full of lies, of course - but lies with a grain of truth. The Queen's swift descent into drunken insanity was predictable enough (and not without its amusing side). But verily did Rastarin pay for her sins at last. Indeed, worse than death befell this ill-starred scion of fallen Númenor, a fate so dreadful that even the servants of Morgoth pitied her. It is a long tale, full of joy and sorrow, and valiant deeds that were not wholly vain. But that, dear reader, is another story altogether...

- Mithrandir

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